NATION

13 defence deals sealed for Rs 2,000 cr

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BUSINESS

Adani Group to invest up to $20B across businesses

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SPORTS

Ex-India spinner Dilip Doshi no more

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 25 JUNE 2025 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 28 DHU AL-HIJJAH, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 171 | Pages: 8

Axiom-4 launch likely to launch today

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla is poised to launch on the Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS) on 25 June, as announced by NASA. The launch is scheduled for 12.01pm IST from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket. This mission, marking a significant return for India, Hungary, and Poland to space, is led by Commander Peggy Whitson, with Shukla serving as pilot alongside mission specialists Tibor Kapu from Hungary and Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland. Originally set for 29 May, the launch has faced multiple delays due to technical issues. *—PTI*

Tharoor: Praised Modi not because I want to join BJP

MOSCOW, 24 JUNE

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Tuesday said his article on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's energy, dynamism and willingness to engage remained a "prime asset" for India on the global stage was a statement of national unity and interest. His remarks were seen as likely to irk his Congress party and widen cracks in his ties with its leadership. Asked about The Hindu article, the he said: "It is not a sign of my leaping to join the Prime Minister's party (the BJP) . It is a statement of national unity, of national interest and of standing up for India, is fundamentally why I came back to India after 25 years of service at the UN." *—PTI*

India-US F-414 jet deal to be finalised by March: HAL

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is expected to conclude a significant deal with US defence giant GE Aerospace by March for the joint production of the F-414 jet engines, essential for India's next-generation combat aircraft, according to HAL Chairman and Managing Director DK Sunil. Sunil said that negotiations about transfer of technology principles—amounting to an estimated 80 per cent—have progressed, and efforts are now focused on commercial terms. The F-414 engines will be integrated into the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft Mark 2 variant. HAL also secured a major contract to supply 156 Prachand light combat helicopters, valued at Rs 62,700 crore, which will start arriving in 2028. *—PTI*

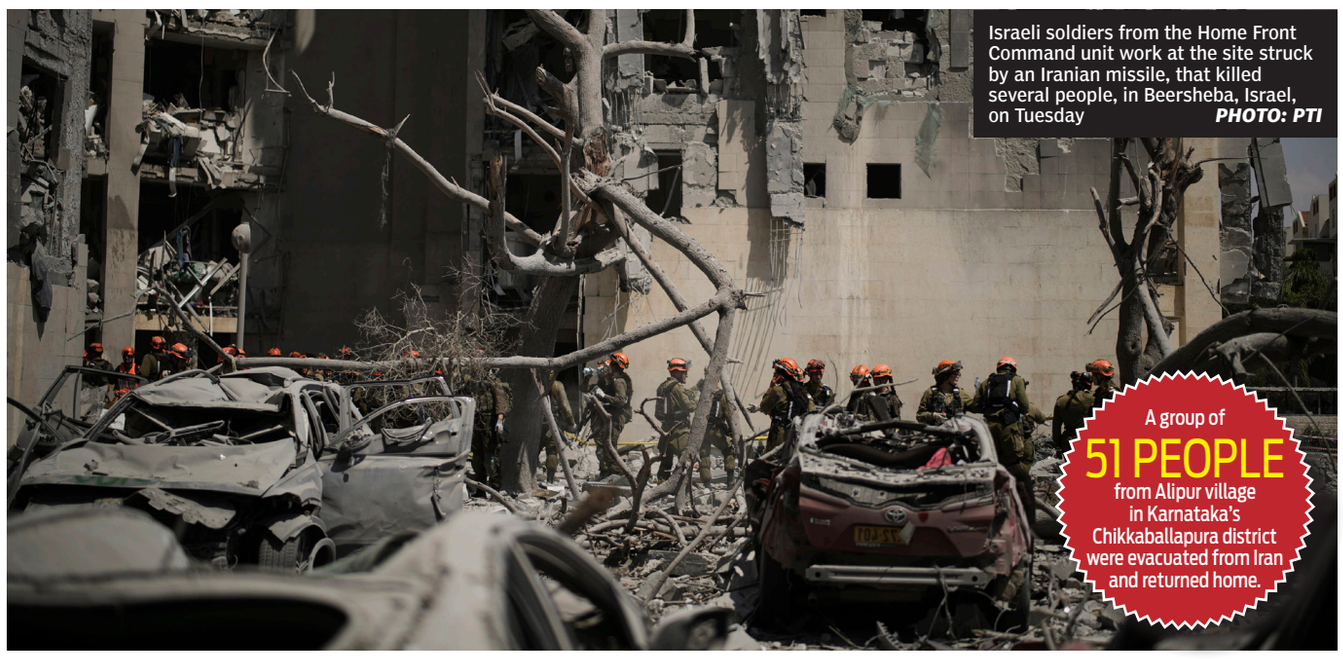
>>>>More on Page 4

In a first, India enters top 100 SDG rankings

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

For the first time, India secured a place among the top 100 out of 167 countries ranked for their progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to a report published on Tuesday. The SGDs were adopted in 2015 with the idea that to save the planet, no one should be left behind in the overall development matrix by 2030. The score measures progress on a scale of 0 to 100 where 100 indicates a country has achieved all 17 goals and 0 means no progress has been made. The US, which formally opposed SDGs, ranks last (193rd) for the second year. *—PTI*

>>>>More on Page 4



Israeli soldiers from the Home Front Command unit work at the site struck by an Iranian missile, that killed several people, in Beersheba, Israel, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

A group of **51 PEOPLE** from Alipur village in Karnataka's Chikkaballapura district were evacuated from Iran and returned home.

To cease or not to cease?

Trump declares Iran-Israel ceasefire; it first fails then holds

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

In a series of twists, US President Donald Trump claimed that Israel and Iran had agreed to a "complete and total ceasefire", ending the 12-day onslaught. Initially, his statement seemed meaningless amid reports of a continuation of hostilities but later the ceasefire seemed to come into effect, with both sides appearing to halt military movements.

Ceasefire ignored

Barely 3 hours after his statement, Israel said Iran launched missiles toward it. Explosions boomed and sirens sounded across northern Israel midmorning. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz immediately responded, saying that he had instructed the IDF to "respond forcefully in the heart of Tehran". However, Iran denied firing missiles after the ceasefire was announced.

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi too initially appeared sceptical of Trump's bold claims.

"As of now, there is NO agreement on any ceasefire or cessation of military operations," he wrote on X. "The final decision on the cessation of our military operations will be made later".

Following President Trump's conversation, Israel refrained from additional attacks

Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel Prime Minister

Provided that the Israeli regime stops its illegal aggression against the Iranian people.... we have no intention to continue our response afterwards

—Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran Foreign Minister

I'm not happy with Iran, but I'm really unhappy with Israel going out this morning....I didn't like the fact that Israel unloaded right after we made the deal. And now I hear Israel just went out because they felt violated by one rocket that didn't land anywhere

Donald Trump, US President

Trump angered

Israel began preparing a strong retaliation, eliciting a stern response from Trump. "ISRAEL. DO NOT DROP THOSE BOMBS. IF YOU DO IT IS A MAJOR VIOLATION," Trump posted on Truth Social. "BRING YOUR PILOTS HOME, NOW!"

Ceasefire holds

After Trump's statement, the ceasefire appeared to hold, with no new strikes reported at the time of publication.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the leader held off on tougher strike after speaking to Trump. However, Israel said it struck an Iranian radar in response.

Trump then claimed a ceasefire between Iran and Israel was "in effect".

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian later said Tehran would uphold the ceasefire.

Trump later said that China can continue buying oil from Iran.

Airspaces reopen

Air India said it will resume flights to the Middle East as airspaces gradually reopen. Most of the operations will resume from 25 June. Air India Expressway similarly gradually began operations in on Tuesday. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 5, 6, 7

RaGa alleges vote theft in M'rashtra

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Flagging alleged irregularities in the Maharashtra assembly polls, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday claimed that there weren't isolated glitches but "vote theft" and demanded the immediate release of machine-readable digital voter rolls as well as CCTV footage.

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha shared on X a media report which claimed that in just six months between the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the Maharashtra assembly polls, Nagpur South West -- the seat held by BJP leader and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis -- added 29,219 new voters.

"In Maharashtra CM's own constituency, the voter list grew by 8 per cent in just 5 months. Some booths saw a 20-50 per cent surge. BLOs reported unknown individuals casting votes," Gandhi said in his post. "Media uncovered thousands of voters with no verified address. And the EC? Silent -- or complicit. These aren't isolated glitches. This is vote theft. The cover-up is the confession."

In response, the Chief Electoral Office in Maharashtra said that the Election Commission of India had already shared electoral rolls with all recognised political parties.

"During 2nd Special Summary Revision-2024, which was taken up before the General Elections to Maharashtra Assembly-2024, the copies of draft and final electoral rolls of all 288 ACs were provided to representatives of all recognised political parties including INC," the office said.

"We presume that any issue regarding conduct of elections would have already been raised through election petitions filed in the competent court of law (High Court)," it said. "However, if you still have any issues, you are welcome to write to us and the Commission is also willing to meet you in person at a mutually convenient date and time to discuss all issues." *—PTI*

CM seeks Murmu's nod for 7 K'taka Bills

President Droupadi Murmu with Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during a meeting at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Tuesday. He sought her approval on seven key bills passed by the State legislature.

The Bills awaiting Presidential assent include measures spanning education, mining taxation, public procurement transparency, and administrative reforms.

Among the prominent Bills, is The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Karnataka Amendment) Bill 2025, which seeks to modify the existing RTE framework in the State.

The Karnataka (Mineral Rights and Mineral Bearing Land) Tax Bill 2024 aims to enhance the State's revenue from its mineral resources, while the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement (Amendment) Act 2025 is designed to bring greater accountability in government purchases.

These Bills require the President's assent as they fall under provisions that mandate central government approval before implementation in the State. *—PTI*

CM, FM TALK TAXES

Siddaramaiah met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to seek the Centre's support for a pro-growth approach in tax devolution among states by the 16th Finance Commission. He briefed her on Karnataka's significant losses under the 15th Finance Commission. He requested the next commission to reduce the weightage for income-distance by 20 percentage points and reallocate it to fiscal contribution: the State's share in national GDP.

All speculation: Aviation Minister says India examining AI Black Box

PUNE, 24 JUNE

Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu has confirmed that the black box from the recent Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad is currently being examined by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB). He dismissed media speculation suggesting that the device would be sent abroad for analysis, stating, "It is all speculation. The Black Vox is very much in India and it is currently being investigated by the AAIB."

The London-bound Air India flight crashed into a hostel complex shortly after taking off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on 12 June, resulting in the loss of 270 lives, including 241 passengers onboard. Remarkably, there was one survivor.

The Black Box, which records critical flight data, was retrieved from the crash site on 13 June. When questioned about the expected timeline for data retrieval, Naidu called for patience while the AAIB conducts its investigation.

"Decoding the Black Box is going to give an in-depth insight into what happened moments before the plane crash," he said. *—PTI*

Suspend AI Boeing fleet: Plea in SC

A plea in the Supreme Court has sought suspending Air India Boeing aircraft operations pending a safety audit within two weeks in wake of the recent Ahmedabad air tragedy that claimed lives of 241 passengers and crew on board. The plea filed by petitioner and advocate Ajay Bansal has made the Centre, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Air India Limited and Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) as parties.

>>>>More on Page 3

Centre to buy 2.5L tonnes mangoes from State

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

The Central Government announced on Tuesday its decision to procure 250,000 tonnes of mangoes from Karnataka for the 2025-26 marketing year at a rate of Rs 1,616 per quintal, as part of the Market Intervention Scheme aimed at safeguarding the interests of farmers amid a significant downturn in prices.

This procurement will be carried out under the auspices of the Union Agriculture Ministry, following concerns raised by Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy regarding the plight of mango growers in his home State, addressed to Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Current market prices have plummeted to Rs 400 per quintal in the State. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

In China, NSA says 'shun double standards' and stop backing Pak

BEIJING, 24 JUNE

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, attending a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) conclave, condemned the "double standards" in the global fight against terrorism, specifically referencing Pakistan's role in sponsoring such activities.

In his address, Doval highlighted India's deep concerns regarding the persistent threat from UN-proscribed terrorist groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). He emphasised that any act of terrorism, particularly cross-border attacks, constitutes a crime against humanity and called for decisive action against those responsible for perpetuating such violence.

NSA Ajit Doval with China Foreign Minister Wang Yi *PHOTO: PTI*

The NSA urged member nations to hold accountable the perpetrators, organisers, and financiers of cross-border terrorism and to dismantle their associated networks. Doval also advocated for joint information operations to combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism.

In a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Doval stressed the importance of cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts for regional peace and stability, while discussing broader India-China relations. *—PTI*

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DOWRY DEATH CASE

Participating in Op Sindoor doesn't grant you immunity before law: SC

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Participating in Operation Sindoor doesn't give you immunity from committing atrocity at home, the Supreme Court on Tuesday said while refusing to exempt a convict from surrendering in a dowry death case of his wife.

A bench of Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and K Vinod Chandran made the observation while hearing an appeal filed against an order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which dismissed his appeal and upheld his sentence.

Senior advocate Vikram Chaudhary, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that the man was a participant of Operation Sindoor.

"For the past 20 years I am a black cat commando posted in Rashtriya Rifles," he said.

The bench then remarked, "That doesn't give you immunity from committing atrocity at home. This goes to show how physically fit you are, and the manner in which alone you could have killed your wife, strangulated your wife."

Noting that the petitioner was convicted for a serious offence, the bench felt it wasn't a fit to grant him exemption. A trial court in Amritsar on July 2004 had convicted petitioner Baljinder Singh under Section 304-B (dowry death) of IPC for the death of his wife within two years of marriage. *—PTI*

Salon's flesh trade racket busted in Mangaluru

MANGALURU, 24 JUNE

A raid was conducted at a salon in Bejai, Mangaluru on Tuesday after it was allegedly found running a flesh trade under the guise of a salon, police said. Sixth Sense Beauty Salon, located on the second floor of Pinto Chambers, is owned by a resident of Udupi. A case has been registered at Urwa Police Station under relevant sections of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, and an investigation is underway. Based on a police report submitted after the raid, the Mangaluru City Corporation has cancelled the salon's trade licence. Police said action will continue against establishments found to be involved in unlawful activities. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Prajwal Revanna moves HC again for bail in rape case

BENGALURU, 24 JUNE

Former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna once again approached the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday, seeking bail in the high-profile sexual assault and rape case against him. The court had earlier denied his bail plea, citing the gravity of the allegations and risk of witness tampering. Senior Advocate Prabhuling K Navadgi said the prolonged delay in proceedings before the trial court was sufficient reason to reconsider Revanna's plea. However, the government opposed and added that the delay was due to Revanna's conduct in court. *—PTI*

Never said there's dearth of funds: HM

Dr G says he was misunderstood; BJP seeks Guv's intervention, says State is Cong's 'ATM'

BENGALURU, 24 JUNE

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Tuesday clarified that there is no shortage of funds in the State government, and that his earlier statement has been misunderstood.

"I did not say it like that. Who said there is no money? I have defended the government, saying that we have presented a record budget....as someone said things jokingly during the speech, I reacted in a similar fashion, that's all," Parameshwara told reporters on Tuesday.

Reiterating that Siddaramaiah has presented a Rs 4.09 lakh crore budget, he said, " I'm now saying officially that there is no financial distress in our government. I'm saying it very clearly. Sometimes, there may be a delay in the release of funds, as DPR and estimates have to be prepared before releasing money. There may be some delay in that; other than that, there is nothing else. There is no shortage of funds in our government for any reason. I'm making it clear. If anyone has misunderstood my statement, I'm correcting that," he added.

The Home Minister had on Monday told Bagalkot's Badami MLA Bheemasen B Chimmanakatti "We don't have money, Siddaramaiah doesn't have money now."

State BJP President BY Vijayendra, meanwhile, urged Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to intervene in the "rampant corruption" in the State and demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Housing Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan.

Alleging that State has become an "ATM" for the Congress high command, he claimed that all ministers are under tremendous pressure to collect money to meet the demands of their party's central leadership, leading to corruption in every department.

His accusations against the government came in the wake of Congress MLA from Aland, BR Patil's claims about bribery in the allotment of public housing.

Speaking to reporters, he said, "Parameshwara has directed his party MLAs not to seek funds. The administration has completely collapsed. Corruption is rampant not only in the Housing Department but across every department."

Vijayendra alleged that ministers have "literally opened counters" for collecting bribes in every department.

"Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda had even asked officers to put up a rate list (while admonishing officials). This is the situation in Karnataka," he claimed.

The State government and Siddaramaiah have "literally handed over Karnataka to the commission mafia," he alleged. *—PTI*

While Parameshwara says there is enough money for development, BJP Chief BY Vijayendra says MLAs have been told not to seek funds ***PHOTO: PTI***

Will resign if corruption charges proven: Zameer

BENGALURU, 24 JUNE

State Minister for Housing and Minorities Affairs, Zameer Ahmed Khan on Tuesday said he would resign if the corruption allegations were proven. Denouncing claims about corruption in the housing allotment scheme, he called leaders to reveal names of the officials taking bribes.

"If at all I'm involved or anywhere my name comes in investigation, I'm ready to resign, and I'll leave. I'm not sticking to my seat. I'll resign if my name comes in the investigation," Khan told reporters here.

He challenged party leaders BR Patil and Raju Kage to reveal the names of officials who are taking bribes to give houses to people.

"Patil hasn't made allegations against me," he said.

Khan said that he is ready for a CBI inquiry. "I have also asked officials to investigate this issue."

After the government raised the minority housing allotment quota from 10 pc to 15 pc, Congress leader Patil, in a leaked phone call, claimed corruption was rampant in house allotment. Kage said that it "wouldn't be surprising if I resign within 2 days." *—PTI*

Rights violated: Bike taxi ban challenged in HC

BENGALURU, 24 JUNE

Two individual bike owners moved the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday, challenging a recent single judge ruling that banned the operation of bike taxis in the state.

The petitioners argued that the State cannot infringe upon the fundamental right to carry on a business or choose a bike taxi over the metro or a bus.

Represented by Senior Advocate Dhyan Chinnappa, the owners argued that the prohibition not only contradicts provisions in the Motor Vehicles Act, but also impacts livelihood and public convenience.

Appearing before a Division Bench comprising Acting Chief Justice V Kameswar Rao and Justice CM Joshi, Chinnappa contended that the Motor Vehicles Act allows two-wheelers to be registered as transport vehicles. Therefore, the state government cannot legally refuse to issue contract carriage permits to bikes intended for taxi use.

The ban was earlier enforced through a ruling in April, where a single judge held that without proper guidelines under Section 93 of the Motor Vehicles Act, bike taxis cannot be permitted. The ruling also barred the Transport department from registering motorcycles as transport vehicles or issuing them contract carriage permits. The order was to be implemented by 16 June, after a six-week grace period.

- The petitioners say if there are safety concerns, they must be addressed; outright ban does help anyone

"News reports have shown how disastrous this ban has been for the public... If there are safety concerns, the State should address them through policy -- not by outright prohibition," Chinnappa said while representing bike owners -- Varikruti Mahendra Reddy and Madhu Kiran.

The court called for further hearing on 25 June. *—PTI*

MAN CLAIMS HE TOOK 3 HRS TO TRAVEL 12KM, THANKS TO BIKE TAXI BAN

BENGALURU, 24 JUNE

Traffic snarls have been one of the worst banes of City, with a Reddit user claiming that he took 3-hours to travel a mere 12km.

In a Reddit post, he said, "Left the office at 6pm. Got home at 9.15. My house is 12km away. There was no rain. No protest. No accident. Just Bengaluru being Bengaluru."

"The bus that usually covers my route didn't show up today. Nothing on Tummoc or Namma BMTC, just silence. Waited a while, then gave up and took a different bus hoping to switch mid-way. That one dropped me somewhere in between, and then began the great auto hunt (sic)," the user said. Since the 16 June bike taxi ban across State, commuters are claiming that the traffic situation has worsened.

"Not a single driver accepted unless I tipped Rs50+. 'Optional tip' is the biggest joke in this city. Meter? LOL. Eventually paid more for an auto than I'd pay for an intercity bus." The ban was postponed a few times before the HC sanction. *—Salar News*

Lokayukta raids BBMP, MCC, other govt officials

BENGALURU, 24 JUNE

State Lokayukta executed extensive raids across multiple locations, targeting several government officials accused of amassing disproportionate wealth.

A surprise inspection led by officials from the Lokayukta's Mangaluru and Udupi divisions revealed several administrative lapses and irregularities across key departments of the Mangaluru City Corporation (MCC).

In the revenue and town planning sections, the presence of middlemen was notably high. A broker was found in possession of Rs 5 lakh in unaccounted cash. An official who retired as health officer 15 years ago was found continuing in the same post

Raids were also conducted at offices and residences associated with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Chikkamagaluru Town Municipality, and Anekal Town Municipality, among others, spanning areas such as Bengaluru, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Anekal, Gadag, Dharwad, and Kalaburagi.

Among those targeted were Prakash, Assistant Engineer at BBMP Govindrajnagar; Dr S Pradeep, Associate Research Director of Organic Farming; and Latha Mani, Accounts Officer at Anekal Town Municipality. Additionally, the operation also focused on Dhruvaraj, Town Police Inspector at Gadag, and Ashok Vasanad, Chief Engineer in Belagavi.

Further investigations found lavish properties, including a luxurious bungalow owned by Vasanad in Dharwad, where gold and silver ornaments were discovered. The Lokayukta's teams meticulously examined documents, property records, and cash holdings to uncover any financial irregularities linked to the officials' wealth.

Raids were also carried out on a police inspector in Gadag for alleged asset accumulation beyond his known income. Authorities continue to seek clarity on the findings from the raids, emphasising the ongoing battle against corruption in the state. *—PTI/ANI*

Lokayukta found that the presence of middlemen was notably high in the revenue and town planning sections ***PHOTO: PTI***

- A surprise inspection led by officials from the Lokayukta's Mangaluru and Udupi divisions revealed several administrative lapses

BJP ex-MP's aides held for road rage

BENGALURU, 24 JUNE

Karnataka police have arrested the driver and gunman of former BJP MP Anantkumar Hegde in connection with a road rage incident involving two vehicles on a highway near Nelamangala in Bengaluru Rural district, officials confirmed on Tuesday.

State Home Minister G Parameshwara, commenting on the matter, said, "As per the information I have received, it seems that when Anant Kumar Hegde was to arrive on the highway, his driver and gunman stopped a vehicle and assaulted someone. I can't say anything right now, as a full investigation is still pending. They (Hegde's side) have claimed that no assault took place. Let's wait and see what comes out of the investigation."

Anantkumar Hegde ***PHOTO: ANI***

The minister added, "The police have stated that Anantkumar Hegde himself did not assault anyone. They have informed me that they will carry out the next phase of the investigation and take appropriate action. The investigation will determine whether Anantkumar Hegde was involved or not."

Bengaluru Rural SP CK Baba said a case was registered at Dabaspet police station. *—ANI*

'SITAARE ZAMEEN PAR'

Bollywood actor Aamir Khan greets Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi. The actor was in the national capital to meet President Droupadi Murmu when he bumped into CM ***PHOTO: PTI***

Swollen rivers: 7 bridges closed in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 24 JUNE

Due to heavy rains in southern Maharashtra, water levels rose in the Krishna Doodhaganga and Vedaganga rivers in Chikkodi sub division of Belagavi district. Following this, seven bridges that were opened for traffic on Sunday after a week of closure had to be closed again on Monday, officials said.

Police have been deployed near bridges.

Chikkodi Assistant Commissioner SS Sampagavi said river Krishna was getting more than the usual average of 80,000 cusecs water since Friday. While it was 90,000 cusecs on Sunday, it rose to 1.2 lakh cusecs by Monday evening.

"Rivers Krishna, Doodhaganga and Vedaganga are in flood situation not because of the rains in its catchment areas, but due to inflow from Maharashtra," Sampagavi said.

Belagavi district officials said it is prepared to face floods and has alerted all departments. Food, health and medical departments have been put on high alert, they said.

Belagavi deputy commissioner Mohammed Roshan said supplies and enough members of medical staff have been kept ready. Schools, hostels and "samudhaya bhavans" have been identified to house the affected people in case of floods, he said, adding that boats are being arranged to shift people. *—Salar News*

FARMERS SEEK HELP

Protesting farmers dump mangoes on Bengaluru-Chennai Highway

Mango farmers dump the 'King of fruits' on Bengaluru Chennai National Highway near Kolar, on Tuesday morning ***PHOTO: SALAR***

KOLAR, 24 JUNE

Anguished mango farmers in Kolar dumped their harvest on the Bengaluru-Chennai National Highway on Tuesday, disrupting traffic flow with hundreds of vehicles coming to a halt.

The farmers were protesting against the State government's failure to announce the support price for mangoes grown in Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts.

At around 8am, farmers arrived near Kondarajenahalli, situated on the outskirts of Kolar, with tractors loaded with mangoes and dumped them on the National highway.

Although police arrived on the scene and urged the demonstrators not to disrupt the flow of traffic, the farmers were in no mood to listen. Chanting slogans against the State Government for failing to address the issue, they alleged that although the Union Government agreed to provide its share, the State Government is buying time in announcing the support price.

- The farmers were protesting against the State government's failure to announce the support price for mangoes grown

They also shouted slogans against Legislators and other elected representatives of Kolar and Chikkaballapur district for failing to raise the issue with the State Government.

Speaking on the occasion, Chinnappa Reddy, President of Kolar district Mango Growers Association criticised the State government, saying mango growers of Kolar were suffering due to the fall in prices.

Many farmers allowed the crop to wither in the farms itself, as they felt the present procurement price would not even fetch the labour and transport expenses, he said.

Reddy urged the State government to immediately announce the support price lest the farmers would to lay siege to Vidhana Soudha and dump their produce in front of building.

After a brief pause, police chased away the demonstrators and used earth moving equipment to clear the fruits on the highway. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: X

Kishanganga, Ratle dispute: India seeks pause

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

India has formally requested a pause in proceedings related to disputes over the Kishanganga and Ratle hydropower projects, as it seeks to take control over its western river systems under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), officials on Tuesday said. The government has in a letter addressed to World Bank-appointed neutral expert Michel Lino called for suspension of the agreed work programme that outlines Pakistan's written submissions by August and joint discussions scheduled for November. India put the Indus Water Treaty in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack. The World Bank has not yet issued a response. *—PTI*

Himanta 'threatens Muslims': Stop throwing beef

GOALPARA, 24 JUNE

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Tuesday that the "business" of throwing beef at various places should stop, or else it could lead to others placing pork in different areas in retaliation. He said the government does not want such incidents disturbing harmony. "We have to stop these people from this business of throwing beef, else others will start placing pork at different places," Sarma said. "Those who are doing it should understand that if Hindus don't like one form of meat, the Muslims also do not prefer another type...if beef is thrown in front of temples and "namghars" (Vaishnavite place of worship), what will they do if pork is placed in front of mosques?" he asked. *—PTI*

'No dearth of funds, bureaucracy needs work'

PUNE, 24 JUNE

Union minister Nitin Gadkari has said there is no dearth of funds for projects but expressed concern over the bureaucracy's lack of flexibility and a "complete no to out-of-the-box ideas". Former bureaucrat Vijay Kelkar adopted a flexible approach and was an exception to this mindset, Gadkari said on Monday at a function in Pune, where Kelkar was conferred the Punyabhushan Award. "There is no death of funds with us. I always talk of Rs 1 lakh crore, Rs 50,000 crore, Rs 2 lakh crore projects. Generally journalists do not trust politicians when it comes to big ticket announcements. I tell them to record what I say and run breaking news if the work does not get materialised," he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Declare Hindi as national language: M'rashtra SP chief

MUMBAI, 24 JUNE

Maharashtra Samajwadi Party President Abu Azmi on Tuesday supported state government's decision to make Hindi the default third language in schools. He said Marathi should be first language, English second & Hindi third. Azmi also said Hindi should be declared as national language. "Marathi is the first language; people run behind English as they are 'slaves', so it is the second language... I reiterate the third one should be Hindi. There is a committee in the Parliament that goes across country to promote Hindi, and all the works of central government also take place in Hindi. Some people want to play politics... Hindi should 100 per cent be declared as national language...," he said. *—ANI*

SUSPEND AI BOEING FLEET: PLEA IN SC

The plea says that step should be taken since safety audit is still pending

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

A plea in the Supreme Court has sought suspending Air India Boeing aircraft operations pending a safety audit within two weeks in wake of the recent Ahmedabad air tragedy that claimed lives of 241 passengers and crew on board.

The plea sought directions to the authorities, particularly the DGCA, to conduct unannounced audits of entire fleet of Air India and other air carriers operating in India, with public disclosure of findings and imposition of immediate corrective measures or penalties for non-compliance.

The plea filed by petitioner and advocate Ajay Bansal has made the Centre, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Air India Limited and Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) as parties.

It also sought directions for stringent security and scientific checks of all planes operating in India and immediate grounding of all aircraft found not fully functional or without prescribed facilities for international passenger service until all defects were rectified and airworthiness recertified.

In the interim, the plea sought to "suspend operation of Boeing aircraft of Air India, pending a safety audit within two weeks, in view of the recent crash and reported maintenance backlogs."

> In the interim, the plea sought to "suspend operation of Boeing aircraft of Air India, pending a safety audit within two weeks, in view of the recent crash and reported maintenance backlogs."

The petitioner further sought within four weeks the formulation and notification of fresh mandatory guidelines prescribing stringent and periodic functional checks of all cabin equipment, engines, airframes and ancillary systems, consistent with best international standards.

The plea claimed the seats failed to recline properly, the seat-back entertainment systems were entirely non-functional and air-conditioning did not work until cruising altitude.

The recent crash of an Air India Boeing aircraft on the Ahmedabad-London route has further compounded concerns of general public, the plea added.

Calling it a violation of Article 21 of the Constitution, Bansal said the safety and security of all air passengers was subsumed within "life" under the constitutional provision. *—PTI*

BODY OF KERALA NURSE KILLED IN AI PLANE CRASH BROUGHT HOME

T'PURAM, 24 JUNE

The body of Ranjitha, a 37-year-old nurse from Pathanamthitta district, was repatriated to Kerala on Tuesday morning following her tragic death in Ahmedabad flight disaster. Identified through a DNA test, her remains arrived at the international airport in Thiruvananthapuram around 7am.

The coffin was subsequently taken to her village, where it will rest at a local school for public homage.

Accompanied by her brother and a close relative, Ranjitha, mother of two, was remembered for her commitment to her profession while working abroad to support her family. *—PTI*

Mortal remains of Ranjitha at Thiruvananthapuram airport

PHOTO: ANI

Congress members stage a protest over the death of a girl in a bomb explosion at Kaliganj in Naida district of West Bengal, outside the Election Commission office in Kolkata

PHOTO: PTI

3 more held for Kaliganj girl's death

KOLKATA, 24 JUNE

Three additional individuals have been apprehended following the tragic death of a 13-year-old girl in a bomb explosion during what has been described as a violent celebration of the Kaliganj bypoll results in West Bengal's Nadia district, police confirmed on Tuesday.

With these latest arrests, the total number of individuals detained in relation to the incident has risen to four. The girl, Tamanna Khatun, a school student, was killed on Monday in the Malandi village of the Barochandgar area. Reports suggest that bombs were allegedly thrown during a rally celebrating the Trinamool Congress (TMC) victory.

> Police reports said, Tamanna sustained severe splinter injuries and was pronounced dead upon arrival at a local medical facility.

Police reports said, Tamanna sustained severe splinter injuries and was pronounced dead upon arrival at a local medical facility. Her body has been sent for a post-mortem examination, as investigations continue into cause of the explosion. *—PTI*

Pawar wins seat in Baramati sugar mill body poll

PUNE, 24 JUNE

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Tuesday won his seat in the Malegaon Cooperative Sugar Mill poll, touted as a battle of prestige to wrest power over the sugar body in Baramati, the pocket borough of Pawars. The election, held on Sunday, included 19,549 voters in group "A", comprising sugarcane cultivators from the region, while 102 voters were in group "B", which consists members from various cooperative bodies affiliated to the sugar mill, a poll official said. Pawar got 91 out of 101 votes against his rival who bagged only 10. One vote was not polled in the "B" category. *—PTI*

India evacuates 3K Indians from Iran, Israel

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

India on Tuesday evacuated 292 citizens from Iran and 366 nationals from Israel amid escalating tensions between the two countries following the US bombing at three Iranian nuclear sites

PHOTO: X/Randhir Jaiswal

India evacuates 3,000 Indians from Iran and Israel by Tuesday morning. Over 600 citizens aircraft who were moved out of Israel to Egypt and Jordan by road, were transported in military transport aircraft C-17, a heavy lift.

India on Tuesday evacuated 292 citizens from Iran and 366 nationals from Israel amid escalating tensions between the two countries following the US bombing of three Iranian nuclear sites.

With the fresh batch of evacuees from Iran, India has brought back 2,295 Indians from the Persian Gulf nation so far.

India brought back 161 Indians in a chartered flight from Amman that landed at 8.20am. The Indians were moved from Israel to Jordan through land border crossings.

Another group of 165 Indians were flown back to New Delhi from Amman in a C-17 military transport aircraft.

They were received at the airport by Union Minister L Murugan.

292 Indian nationals were evacuated from Iran on a special flight that arrived in New Delhi from Mashhad at 3.30 am, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

290 Indian nationals and one Sri Lankan were evacuated from Iranian city Mashhad on a special flight last night.

India launched Operation Sindhu last week to bring back Indians from Iran and Israel in view of increasing hostilities between the two nations.

> With the fresh batch of evacuees from Iran, India has brought back 2,295 Indians from the Persian Gulf nation so far. India brought back 161 Indians in a chartered flight from Amman that landed at 8.20am.

Israel and Iran have fired hundreds of missiles and drones at each other's cities and military and strategic facilities since the hostilities began over a week back.

The tensions escalated significantly following the US bombing of three major Iranian nuclear sites on Sunday morning. *—PTI*

Stranded mountaineer in Iran returns to Kolkata

KOLKATA, 24 JUNE

As an Air India flight from Delhi touched down in Kolkata on Monday, one passenger was struggling to contain a surge of emotions. It took 40-year-old Falguni Dey, an amateur mountaineer and a geography professor from Kolkata, 11 days of uncertainty and trauma to escape the conflict-torn terrains of Iran, which included some 3,000km of road travel through the war-ravaged country in his bid to cross its borders, and return home to his wife and two-and-half years old daughter. Thanks to the efforts of the Indian embassy in Iran, Dey was among the 292 Indian passengers put on a special flight of the privately-owned Iranian airline, Mahan Air, which took off from the Mashhad international airport and reached Delhi on Tuesday. *—PTI*

J&K HC orders return of deported woman to Pak

JAMMU, 24 JUNE

Emphasising that human rights are the most sacrosanct component of a human life, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court has ordered the Union Home Ministry to facilitate the return of a woman deported to Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack.

Justice Rahul Bharti was hearing a petition filed by the daughter of Rakshanda Rashid and Sheikh Zahoor Ahmed in which she has stated that Rashid, a Pakistani national, had been married for nearly four decades and was residing in India on a Long-Term Visa.

The order, made available recently, was passed on 6 June, in which the court asked the Secretary of the Union Home Ministry to ensure that the woman is brought back within 10 days and reunited with her family.

However, it was not immediately clear whether efforts had been made to bring her back or the ministry was going to challenge it in a division bench.

The petitioner highlighted her mother's precarious situation in Pakistan, stating she has no one to care for her and is suffering from multiple ailments, putting her health and life at grave risk.

"Human rights are the most sacrosanct component of a human life and, therefore, there are occasions when a constitutional court is supposed to come up with SOS like indulgence notwithstanding the merits and demerits of a case which can be adjudicated only upon in due course of time....therefore, this Court is coming up with a direction to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India to bring back the petitioner from her deportation," the three-page order said. *—PTI*

CITES HC'S POLICY DECISION

Kerala refuses to ban black magic

KOCHI, 24 JUNE

Government submitted that while the court may have noted the social concerns raised in PIL, it cannot compel legislature to pass a law

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The Left Government in Kerala has told the High Court that it will not proceed to enact a law to ban black magic, sorcery, and other inhuman practices, citing a policy decision made by the state cabinet.

In an affidavit filed before a division of Kerala HC, headed by Chief Justice Nitin Jamdar, the state said a draft bill titled "The Kerala Prevention and Eradication of Inhuman Evil Practices, Sorcery and Black Magic Bill, 2022" had been prepared based on recommendations from the Law Reforms Commission.

However, after deliberations, the council of ministers decided on 5 July, 2023, not to go ahead with legislation, it said. The government submitted that while the court may have noted the social concerns raised in PIL, it cannot compel legislature to pass a law.

"A writ of mandamus will not lie against the legislature directing it to legislate on a particular subject," the affidavit said.

Meanwhile, HC asked state government to clarify the steps it intends to take to control sorcery and black magic, especially in light of government's stand that no legislation is currently under consideration.

The plea was filed in 2022 in the wake of a ritual human sacrifice of two women in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala by three people, including a couple.

The petition has claimed that states of Karnataka and Maharashtra have passed laws against sorcery and black magic.

It has also sought a declaration that films on big screens and OTT platforms of having content on superstitious beliefs, including sorcery and occult practices, exempting those having good intentions and having good artistic values, are illegal. *—PTI*

45 MPs sign to remove HC Judge Yadav

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

The Rajya Sabha secretariat has verified the signatures of 45 of the 55 MPs who had signed a notice to bring a motion for the removal of Allahabad High Court Judge Shekhar Yadav over his "hate speech" even as Kapil Sibal and eight others were yet to verify their signatures.

Sibal, who has been vocal for early action on the notice, has claimed that he has not received any email from RSa secretariat, which confirmed having sent the same to his official email thrice during the past six months.

He has questioned the need for the verification of signatures and the delay in initiating the process in March when the notice was submitted on 13 December, 2024.

While 55 MPs have signed the notice for the removal of Justice Yadav, the signature of one of the MPs, Sarfaraz Ahmed, appears twice on the notice.

Ahmed, a JMM MP from Jharkhand, has already met RS Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on the issue and confirmed having signed only once and not twice, sources said.

RS sources said the possibility of a criminal investigation by the Ethics Committee and the Privileges Committee into the notice seeking the removal of Justice Yadav in the House cannot be ruled out as the document bears "forged" signatures of an MP.

They also said the notice for removal of Justice Yadav, which was submitted by 55 opposition MPs, is undated and not addressed to anyone. *—PTI*

Woman raped as husband 'sells' her to friend

DHAR, 24 JUNE

A man allegedly "sold" his wife to pay off a debt of Rs 50,000 to a friend, who later raped her in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district, police said on Tuesday.
Based on a complaint, a case was registered at the women's police station in Indore.
However, considering the seriousness of the offence, the police registered it as a 'zero' FIR and sent it to the Dhar police for action. The woman's husband is a resident of the Kanwan police station area, around 35 km from Dhar district headquarters, while his wife lived in Indore.
A 'zero' FIR is registered by any police station, regardless of jurisdiction, when it receives a complaint regarding a cognisable offence. Kanwan police station in-charge Abhay Neema said the woman alleged that her husband was a gambler, and his debt kept increasing because of the habit. *—PTI*

Porsche case: Accused may be tried as adult

PUNE, 24 JUNE

The prosecution has urged the Juvenile Justice Board to treat a 17-year-old boy accused of driving a Porsche car in an inebriated state and mowing down two persons last year in Pune as an adult, saying he committed a "heinous" act.
The incident, which hit national headlines, took place in Kalyani Nagar area on 19 May last year, resulting in the deaths of motorcycle-borne IT professionals Anish Awadhiya and his friend Ashwini Costa.
The accused teenager got bail hours after the accident and his bail terms included writing a 300-word essay on road safety. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Actor Srikanth sent to judicial custody in drug case

CHENNAI, 24 JUNE

Popular actor Srikanth, who was interrogated by the police for nearly eight hours in connection with a drug case, has been remanded to judicial custody till 7 July, police said on Tuesday.
The actor was questioned at the Nungambakkam police station here on Monday following the detention of former AIADMK functionary T Prasad, whom the police suspect has supplied cocaine to Srikanth, 46, and another actor.
Srikanth's blood samples were collected for medical examination at the Kilpauk Medical College Hospital here, and the tests confirmed the presence of a narcotic substance in his body, police said. *—PTI*

TTD opens kiosks for laddu payment at Tirumala

TIRUPATI, JUNE 24

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has introduced self-service kiosks at laddu counters to ease the laddu payment process, the temple sources said. Pilgrims can now conveniently pay for additional laddus through UPI at these machines, which are installed across various laddu counters in Tirumala, said a TTD release.
TTD has been implementing several digital initiatives to improve crowd flow and offer efficient, hassle-free services to pilgrims arriving at the hill shrine in large numbers.
TTD officials said more kiosks would be installed in a phased manner after evaluating the response, and staff have been deployed to assist senior citizens and first-timers.
The temple body is considering extending digital facilities to accommodation and prasadam counters too. *—PTI*

13 defence deals sealed for Rs 2K cr

This is to boost Army's anti-terror grid

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

The defence ministry has concluded 13 contracts worth Rs 1,980 crore under the emergency procurement mechanism to boost the Indian Army's operational readiness in countering cross-border terrorism.

The Army's integrated drone detection and interdiction systems are being significantly enhanced, officials said. Indian Army has been ramping up the counter-terror grid to combat Pakistan-backed terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

New Delhi carried out precision strikes on nine terror infrastructures in Pakistani territories on 7 May in response to the horrific Pahalgam terror attack.

The ministry has concluded Rs 1,981 crore contracts as against an overall sanctioned outlay of Rs 2,000 crore *PHOTO: PTI*

What is India procuring?

The defence ministry said it is procuring military systems such as low-level lightweight radars, very short-range air defence missiles and launchers, remotely piloted aerial vehicles and loitering munitions, including vertical take-off and landing systems Various categories of drones, bullet proof jackets and ballistic helmets are also being procured.

The ministry has concluded contracts, amounting to Rs 1,981 crore as against an overall sanctioned outlay of Rs 2,000 crore for the Indian Army.

Executed through fast-track procedures under the emergency procurement mandate, the acquisition aims to enhance situational awareness, lethality, mobility, and protection for troops deployed in a counter-terror environment, it said. *– PTI*

IAF to get 6 Tejas jets by March: HAL

GE Aerospace missed delivery deadlines

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

The Indian Air Force will get at least half-a-dozen Tejas Light Combat Aircraft by March 2026, the chief of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, which is manufacturing the cutting-edge fighter jets, has disclosed. He attributes the delivery delays to GE Aerospace missing deadline for supply of its engines.

The slippage in the delivery schedule for the LCA Mk-1A variant of the jet had become a major issue with Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A P Singh raising the matter publicly.

HAL Chairman and Managing Director D K Sunil said the delay was caused only due to the US firm's inability to supply the F404 engines on time. HAL chief told PTI Videos GE Aerospace is expected to supply 12 engines in the current fiscal. This will facilitate delivery of the jets to the IAF.

The slippage in the delivery schedule for the LCA Mk-1A variant of the jet has been a major issue *PHOTO: PTI*

The delay from GE side was initially due to production timelines falling behind during the Covid pandemic, and the subsequent departure of many senior engineers, causing supply chain bottlenecks.

According to Sunil, the technical issues with GE Aerospace have been sorted out and HAL is set to receive 12 jet engines by March 2026.

HAL plans to produce 16 jets in the coming year. The IAF is looking at inducting the warplanes as the number of its fighter squadrons has gone down to 31 from officially sanctioned strength of 42. *– PTI*

At SCO, Rajnath to push anti-terror agenda

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

In line with India's diplomatic offensive against Pakistan-backed cross-border terrorism, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is set to press the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to ramp up efforts to contain terrorism at a two-day conclave of the bloc in China's Qingdao that begins on Wednesday.

Singh is travelling to Qingdao, a port city in China's Shandong province, for the conclave which is expected to deliberate on the evolving regional security scenario. This call to counter terrorism comes nearly a month-and-a-half after India carried out precision strikes on nine terror infrastructures in Pakistani territories in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

It is the first visit to China by a senior Indian minister after the ties came under severe strain following the military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh that began in May 2020. NSA Ajit Doval is also visiting China to attend a conclave of SCO's top national security officials.

It said the defence minister is expected to stress on the need for greater trade, economic cooperation and connectivity in SCO. He will also hold bilateral meetings with the defence ministers of some participating countries, including SCO chair China and Russia. *– PTI*

Ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw, Rajnath Singh and Murugan during a book launch at Rashtrapati Bhawan, in New Delhi on Tuesday *PHOTO: PIB*

India enters top 100 in global SDG rankings for first time

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

India has for the first time secured a place among the top 100 out of 167 countries ranked for their progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to a report published on Tuesday.

According to the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network's 10th and latest Sustainable Development Report (SDR), India ranks 99th on the 2025 SDG Index with a score of 67, while China ranks 49th with 74.4 and the US 44th with 75.2 points.

India ranked 109th in 2024, 112th in 2023, 121st in 2022.

Among India's neighbours, Bhutan takes 74th place with 70.5 points, Nepal ranks 85th with 68.6, Bangladesh 114th with 63.9 and Pakistan 140th with 57 points.

The SGDs were adopted in 2015 with the idea that to save the planet, no one should be left behind in the overall development matrix by 2030.

The score measures progress on a scale of 0 to 100 where 100 indicates a country has achieved all 17 goals and 0 means no progress has been made.

The report's authors flagged that SDG progress has stalled at the global level, with only 17 per cent of the 17 targets projected to be achieved by 2030.

European countries, especially the Nordic nations, continue to top the SDG Index, with Finland ranking first, Sweden second and Denmark third. A total of 19 out of the top 20 countries are in Europe.

The US, which recently withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organisation (WHO) and formally opposed SDGs, ranks last (193rd) for the second year. *– PTI*

US ADVISORY SLAMMED

Meghalaya safest for tourists: DyCM

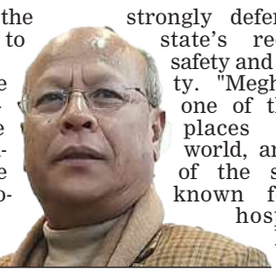
SHILLONG, 24 JUNE

Reacting to a recent adverse travel advisory by the United States, Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong on Tuesday asserted that the state is the safest place in the world for tourists.

The US government had recently issued an advisory asking its citizens to reconsider visiting Meghalaya and the northeastern states due to terrorism and violence.

"It's unfortunate that the US has issued such an advisory. We don't know where they collect their information from to place Meghalaya in that category," Tynsong told PTI.

Tynsong, who also holds the Home portfolio, strongly defended the state's record on safety and hospitality. "Meghalaya is one of the safest places in the world, and people of the state are known for their hospitality," he said.



Tourism Minister Paul Lyngdoh said the state is expected to host 2 million visitors this year, and the tourism department has charted a calendar of events for the whole year, with events like the Cherry blossom festivals.

A senior tourism officer told PTI the government plans to invest over Rs 1,000 crore to boost tourism sector. *– PTI*

Faded runways, faulty planes: DGCA flags lapses at airports

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Aviation watchdog DGCA on Tuesday gave seven days to major airport to fix defects in its airports. On surveillance, DGA found cases of defects reappearing on aircraft and centre line marking faded on runway.

The surveillance, which comes against the backdrop of the fatal Air India plane crash at Ahmedabad on 12 June, covered critical areas such as flight operations, airworthiness, ramp safety, air traffic control, communication, navigation systems, and pre-flight medical evaluations.

Without disclosing names of airlines or any other entities in the ecosystem, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in a statement said the findings have been communicated to those concerned for taking corrective actions within seven days.

The findings have been communicated to those concerned for taking corrective actions within seven days *PHOTO: PTI*

Two teams led by DGCA Joint Director General carried out comprehensive surveillance during night and early morning hours at major airports, including Delhi and Mumbai.

During the surveillance, domestic flight of a scheduled carrier was found to be held up due to worn tyres and was released only after the required rectification, the statement said.

There were multiple cases wherein the reported defects reappeared many times on aircraft, indicating ineffective monitoring and inadequate rectification, it added.

Among other defects, the regulator found that a simulator was not matching with the aircraft configuration and also the software was not updated to the current version. *– PTI*

French woman raped in Udaipur

JAIPUR, 24 JUNE

A man allegedly raped a French tourist in Udaipur after luring her from a party to his apartment, the police said on Tuesday. The accused is currently absconding, the police added.

The incident occurred on Monday in the Badgaon Police Station area. According to the police, the woman, who arrived in Udaipur from Delhi on 22 June, was staying at a hotel in the Ambamata area.

The woman allegedly attended a party at The Greek Farm Cafe and Restro at Tiger Hill, where she met the accused, Siddharth, Station House Officer (SHO) Purna Singh Rajpurohit said. "The accused invited the woman to step outside on the pretext of showing her the nearby sights and later took her to his rented apartment in Sukher, where he raped her," he stated. *– PTI*

HORROR IN UP

Upper caste men tonsure 2 preachers

ETAWAH, 24 JUNE

A group of upper caste men allegedly tonsured the head of a religious preacher and his aide after finding that they hailed from the Yadav caste in Dandarpur village of Uttar Pradesh's Etawah district, police said.

The incident of tonsuring took place on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday. After the video went viral, police arrested four people, including the main accused.

The victims were 'katha vachak' (narrator of holy texts) and had gone to the village for a 'Bhagwad Katha'.

The four accused are Ashish Tiwari, Uttam Kumar Awasthi, Nikki Awasthi, Manu Dubey, all residents of Dandarpur.

Screengrab from the video shows a preacher being tonsured *PHOTO: X*

In the video, which was also shared on X by Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, the accused were purportedly heard saying, "You are getting punished for coming to the village of Brahmins".

- "We were called to perform a Bhagwat Katha in Dandarpur village beginning 21 June. We were questioned about our caste. It was said that we are 'chamar' (scheduled castes), but I said I am not a 'chamar', I am Yadav," The assistant 'katha vaachak', Sant Singh Yadav, told reporters

The assistant 'katha vaachak', Sant Singh Yadav, told reporters, "Earlier, I used to run a private school but the government got the school closed. So I engaged myself in performing Bhagwat Katha, and I became an assistant to 'katha vaachak' Mukut Mani Yadav."

He added, "We were called to perform a Bhagwat Katha in Dandarpur village beginning 21 June. We were questioned about our caste. It was said that we are 'chamar' (scheduled castes), but I said I am not a 'chamar', I am Yadav".

"They also asked me to show my ID. They then said that being a Yadav, you have come in a village of Brahmins to perform Bhagwat Katha. I was tortured throughout the night, and my hair was completely shaved," he alleged.

"Urine was sprinkled over me, and I was told that now I have become pure. They also said that how dare you come to a village of Brahmins," he said. *—PTI*

2 Dalit men beaten, forced to eat grass

BERHAMPUR, 24 JUNE

Two Dalit men in Odisha's Ganjam district were tonsured, assaulted and forced to crawl on their knees and consume grass and drain water on suspicion of cattle smuggling.

The incident, which occurred at Jahada in Kharigumma village on Sunday, has triggered widespread outrage in political circles after purported videos of the assault went viral. PTI could not authenticate the videos.

The victims — Babula Nayak, 54, and Bulu Nayak, 42, of Singipur — were transporting two cows and a calf in an auto from Hariour to their village when they were caught by a group of self-proclaimed 'cow protectors' at Kharigumma, accusing the two of smuggling cattle. "The mob allegedly demanded Rs 30,000 from the duo. When the victims refused, they were assaulted and subjected to degrading treatment," a police officer said.

A video shows cow vigilantes torturing the men *PHOTO: X*

According to the victims, the cattle were meant as a traditional gift for the wedding of Babula's daughter.

The police on Monday detained six people for the assault. *—PTI*

ONGOING CHAOS

Israeli soldiers and rescue team work amid the rubble of residential buildings destroyed by an Iranian missile strike that killed several people, in Beersheba, Israel, on Tuesday. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran began on 13 June, 2025, when Israel launched a surprise attack on Iran's military and nuclear facilities
PHOTO: PTI

Past US attempts to remake Middle East offer warnings

As President Donald Trump floats the idea of "regime change" in Tehran, previous US attempts to remake the Middle East by force over the decades offer stark warnings about the possibility of a deepening involvement in the Iran-Israeli conflict.

"If the current Iranian Regime is unable to MAKE IRAN GREAT AGAIN, why wouldn't there be a Regime change???" Trump posted on his social media site over the weekend.

This came after the US bombed Iran's nuclear sites but before that country retaliated by firing its own missiles at a US base in Qatar.

White House press Secretary Karoline Leavitt on Monday insisted that Trump, who spent years railing against "forever wars" and pushing an "America first" world view, had not committed a political about-face.

Leavitt also suggested that a new government in Iran could come about after its people stage a revolt — not necessarily requiring direct US intervention.

That's a perilous path that other US administrations have taken. And it's a long way from Trump's past dismissal of "stupid, endless wars," and his scoffing at the idea of nation-building championed by his Republican predecessors — including in Afghanistan and Iraq, where the US helped overthrow governments.

Some lessons learned from previous conflicts:

US special forces and Afghan allies drove the Taliban from power and chased Osama bin Laden into Pakistan within months of the 11 September, 2001, attacks.

American tanks rolled into Baghdad weeks after the 2003 invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

But then, both wars went on for years.

The Taliban waged a tenacious, two-decade insurgency and swept back into power as the US beat a chaotic retreat in 2021.

The overthrow of Saddam plunged Iraq into chaos, with Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias battling each other and US forces.

Israel has so far largely succeeded in taking out Iran's air defences and ballistic missiles and US strikes on three sites with missiles and 13,600kgs bunker-buster bombs has wrecked its nuclear program, Trump says.

But that still potentially leaves hundreds of thousands in the military, the Revolutionary Guard and forces known as the Basij, who played a key role in quashing waves of anti-government protests in recent years.

Airstrikes have never been enough on their own.

Take, for example, Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi. His forces withstood a seven-month NATO air campaign in 2011 before rebels fighting city by city eventually cornered and killed him.

There are currently no insurgent groups in Iran capable of taking on the Revolutionary Guard, and it's hard to imagine Israeli or US forces launching a ground invasion of a mountainous country of some 80 million people that is about four times as big as Iraq.

A split in Iran's own security forces would furnish a ready-made insurgency, but it would also likely tip the country into civil war.

There's also the question of how ordinary Iranians would respond.

Protests in recent years show that many Iranians believe their government is corrupt and repressive, and would welcome its demise. But the last time a foreign power attacked Iran — the Iraqi invasion of 1980 — people rallied around the flag.

Some of the biggest cheerleaders for the US invasion of Iraq were exiled opposition figures, many of whom had left the country decades before. When they returned, essentially on the back of US tanks, they were marginalized by local armed groups more loyal to Iran.

There are several large Iranian opposition groups based abroad.

But they are not united and it's unclear how much support any of them has inside the country.

The closest thing to a unifying opposition figure is Reza Pahlavi, the son of the shah who was overthrown in the 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought the theocracy to power.

But many Iranians have bitter memories of repression under the shah, and others might reject Pahlavi over his outreach to Israel, especially if he tries to ride to power on the back of a foreign invasion.

In Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya — and in Syria and Yemen after their 2011 uprisings — a familiar pattern emerged when governments were overthrown or seriously weakened.

Armed groups emerged with competing agendas. Neighbouring countries backed local proxies. Weapons flowed in and large numbers of civilians fled.

The fighting in some places boiled over into full-blown civil war, and ever more violent extremist groups sprouted from the chaos.

When it was all over, Saddam had been replaced by a corrupt and often dysfunctional government at least as friendly to Iran as it was to US. Gadhafi was replaced by myriad militias, many allied with foreign powers. —*PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Closing Strait of Hormuz could backfire on Iran

The war between Israel and Iran has raised concerns that Iran could retaliate by trying to close the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil chokepoint due to the large volumes of crude that pass through it every day.

The US military's strike on three sites in Iran over the weekend has raised questions about how its military might respond.

The Strait of Hormuz is between Oman and Iran, which boasts a fleet of fast-attack boats and thousands of naval mines as well as missiles that it could use to make the strait impassable, at least for a time.

Iran's main naval base at Bandar Abbas is on the north coast of the strait. It could also fire missiles from its long Persian Gulf shore, as its allies, Yemen's Houthi rebels, have done in the Red Sea.

About 20 million barrels of oil per day, or around 20 per cent of the world's oil consumption, passed through the strait in 2024. Most of that oil goes to Asia.

Here is a look at the waterway and its impact on the global economy:

An energy highway in a volatile region

The strait connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It's only 33 kms wide at its narrowest point, but deep enough and wide enough to handle the world's largest crude oil tankers.

Oil that passes through the strait comes from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, and Bahrain, while major supplies of liquefied natural gas come from Qatar. At its narrowest point, the sea lanes for tankers lie in Omani waters, and before and after that cross into Iranian territory.

While some global oil chokepoints can be circumvented by taking longer routes that simply add costs, that's not an option for most of the oil moving through the strait.

That's because the pipelines that could be used to carry the oil on land, such as Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline, they don't have nearly enough capacity. "Most volumes that transit the strait have no alternative means of exiting the region," according to the US Energy Information Administration.

Closing the Strait of Hormuz would send oil prices massively higher — at least at first

If Iran blocked the strait, oil prices could shoot as high as USD 120- USD 130 per barrel, at least temporarily, said Homayoun Falakshahi, head of crude oil analyst at Kpler, in an online webinar Sunday.

That would deal an inflationary shock to the global economy — if it lasted. Analysts think it wouldn't.

Asia would be directly impacted because 84 per cent of the oil moving through the strait is headed for Asia; top destinations are China, India, Japan and South Korea.

China gets 47 per cent of its seaborne oil from the Gulf. China, however, has an oil inventory of 1.1 billion barrels, or 2 1/2 months of supply.

US oil customers would feel the impact of the higher prices but would not lose much supply. The US imported only about 7 per cent of its oil from Persian Gulf countries through the strait in 2024, according to the USEIA. That was the lowest level in nearly 40 years.

Closing the strait would cut off Iran's own oil exports. While Iran does have a new terminal under construction at Jask, just outside the strait, the new facility has loaded oil only once and isn't in a position to replace the strait, according to Kpler analysts.

Closure would hit China, Iran's largest trading partner and only remaining oil customer, and harm its oil-exporting Arab neighbours, who are at least officially supporting it in its war with Israel.

And it would mean blocking Oman's territorial waters, offending a country that has served as a mediator between the US and Iran.

The US would likely intervene to reopen the strait

Any price spike would probably not last. One big reason: Analysts expect that the US Navy would intervene to keep the strait open. In the 1980s, US warships escorted Kuwaiti oil tankers through the strait to protect them against Iranian attacks during the Iran-Iraq war.

A price spike "wouldn't last very long" and the strait would likely be reopened "very fast," said Kpler's Falakshahi.

US use of force to reopen the strait would likely be supported by Europe and "even unofficially by China," he said. "Iran's navy would probably get destroyed in a matter of hours or days." —*PTI*

Strait of Hormuz, Makran region in southern Iran and southwestern Pakistan, Gulf of Oman and the northern coast of Oman as seen from space
PHOTO: NASA EARTH OBSERVATORY

Social unrest, SC order, dictatorial tendencies led to Emergency in '75

- Amid this unrest came the verdict of the Allahabad High Court on 12 June, 1975 that found Gandhi guilty over discrepancies in the electoral campaign, which led to Emergency on the night of 25 June.

The darkest chapter in the history of independent India was written on the midnight of 25 June, 1975 with the proclamation of Emergency but the foreword was penned when the Allahabad High Court declared then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's election from Rae Bareli null and void on 12 June, that year.

The election petition against Gandhi was filed by Raj Narain, the Socialist Party candidate, who lost the election from Rae Bareli.

Narain had alleged that Gandhi's election agent Yashpal Kapoor was a government servant and that she deployed government officials for her election-related work.

HC verdict that found Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractice had intensified public unrest against the government due to high inflation, shortage of essential commodities and the stagnant economy, which was reeling under the impact of the war of 1971 against Pakistan that led to the creation of Bangladesh.

Voices of dissent rose from Gujarat in the west, where the Navnirman Andolan against Chief Minister Chimanbhai Patel was gaining momentum and Bihar in the east, where the youth had mobilised under the leadership of Jayprakash Narayan.

Gandhi had appealed against the high court verdict and had received conditional reprieve from the Supreme Court on 24 June, 1975 that allowed her to continue as the prime minister, but without voting rights in Parliament.

The next day, 25 June, opposition leaders held a massive rally at the Ramlila Maidan in Delhi which ended with a call for a "total revolution" by Jayprakash Narayan, including an appeal to the police and armed forces to disregard orders that their conscience told them were improper.

"If she did not have a dictatorial attitude and did not have a feeling of insecurity, then she would have taken this decision of the court democratically, but she chose another path," veteran journalist Ram Bahadur Rai said recalling the days of the Emergency.

Rattled by the Supreme Court verdict, Gandhi, after consulting her close aides such as Siddharth Shankar Ray, the then chief minister of West Bengal, recommended to President Fakruddin Ali Ahmed to impose Emergency citing existence of threat to the internal security of the nation.

The declaration suspended the constitutional rights of free speech and assembly, imposed censorship on press, limited the power of the judiciary to review the actions of the executive and ordered the arrest of opposition leaders.

Among those arrested were Jayprakash Narayan, the Gandhian socialist leader who had given the call for "Sampoorna Kranti" (Total Revolution) and addressed mass rallies in the months preceding the Emergency, LK Advani, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Madhu Dandavate, Nanaji Deshmukh, Parkash Singh Badal, Prakash Karat, Sitaram Yechury, M Karunanidhi, MK Stalin and scores of political leaders.

Gandhi became the prime minister for the first term in January 1966, after the death of incumbent Lal Bahadur Shastri in Tashkent. Considered as a "goongi gudiya" by a section of Congress, Gandhi demonstrated an independent streak that led to the split in Congress in 1969.

In the 1971 elections, Gandhi won a landslide victory for her Congress-R party. Her popularity surged in the aftermath of the 1971 war against Pakistan, but it was short-lived as political unrest and demonstrations soon became the order of the day in 1973-74.

Amid this unrest came the verdict of the Allahabad High Court on 12 June, 1975 that found Gandhi guilty over discrepancies in the electoral campaign, which led to Emergency on the night of 25 June.

"The prime minister's cabinet met at 6am on 26 June. None of her senior ministers knew of the proclamation in advance, but the cabinet quickly and dutifully approved the decision," recalls author Gyan Prakash in his book "Emergency Chronicles: Indira Gandhi and Democracy's Turning Point."

Gandhi addressed the nation on 26 June on All India Radio and justified the Emergency by citing a "deep and widespread conspiracy" against her government.

"The President has proclaimed Emergency. There is nothing to panic about. I am sure you are all aware of the deep and widespread conspiracy, which has been brewing ever since I began to introduce certain progressive measures of benefit for the common man," Gandhi said in her radio address.

The 21-month period was marked by the suspension of fundamental rights, the government's use of preventive detention laws for arbitrary arrests of thousands of individuals without trial.

The infamous sterilisation campaign led by Sanjay Gandhi resulted in the forced sterilisation of millions of men and women, particularly from poor and marginalised communities, under the guise of population control.

However, the Emergency that was imposed all of a sudden, also came to an end almost in the same manner with Gandhi calling for elections and release of political prisoners on 18 January, 1977. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Japan conducts first missile test on home soil

TOKYO, 24 JUNE

Japan's army announced on Tuesday that it has carried out its first missile test on domestic soil. The Ground Self-Defense Force successfully launched the Type-88 surface-to-ship short-range missile at the Shizunai Anti-Air Firing Range, located on Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's main islands. Approximately 300 soldiers participated in the exercise, targeting an unmanned vessel situated around 40km off Hokkaido's southern coast. Officials are currently assessing the outcomes of the test. This development occurs as Japan enhances its military capabilities to establish deterrence against China. It plans to deploy long-range cruise missiles, including Tomahawks, later this year. Earlier, Japan has conducted missile tests in allied territories, including those of the United States and Australia. *—PTI*

WB loans South Africa $1.5B for infra upgrade

JOHANNESBURG, 23 JUNE

The World Bank has approved a USD 1.5 billion loan for South Africa aimed at enhancing transportation infrastructure and supporting the country's transition to a low-carbon economy, the National Treasury announced on Monday. Challenges such as deteriorating rail systems, congested ports, and frequent power outages have hampered key sectors, including mining and auto manufacturing, leading to sluggish economic growth. President Cyril Ramaphosa's government is committed to combatting corruption and improving management to stimulate economic recovery and reduce high unemployment. The loan is expected to alleviate critical infrastructure bottlenecks in energy and freight transport, facilitating inclusive growth and job creation. *—PTI*

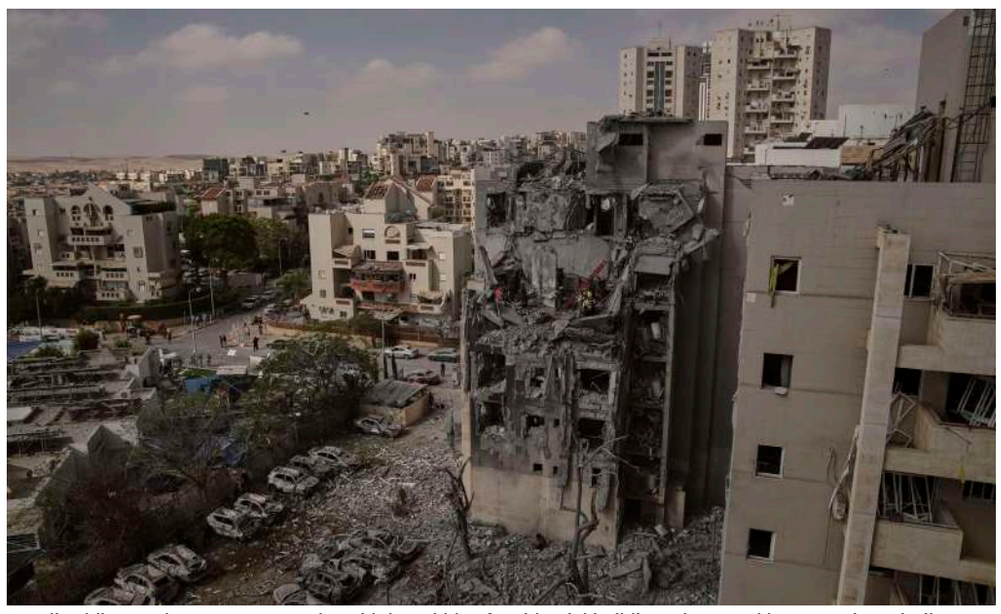
Russian attacks kill 24 civilians in Ukraine

KYIV, 24 JUNE

Russian drones, missiles and artillery killed at least 24 civilians and injured more than 200 others in Ukraine, officials said on Tuesday. Ukraine has also launched long-range drones against Russia, hitting residential areas. A Russian missile attack on Dnipro hit multiple civilian sites in the central Ukrainian city around noon on Tuesday, killing 15 people and injuring at least 174 others, officials said. In the nearby town of Samar, an attack killed two people and injured 14, Dnipro's regional administration head Serhii Lysak wrote on Telegram. The Russian barrage damaged 19 schools, 10 kindergartens, a vocational school, a music school and a social welfare office, as well as eight medical facilities, according to Dnipro Mayor Borys Filatov. One of the blasts blew out the windows of a passenger train carrying around 500 people. Schools are closed for the summer break. Among the injured were two teen girls and a 12-year-old boy. *—PTI*

Israel killed at least 14 Iranian N-scientists

Macron fears Iran will secretly enrich Uranium



Israeli soldiers and rescue team work amid the rubble of residential buildings destroyed by an Iranian missile strike that killed several people, in Beersheba, Israel on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

PARIS, 24 JUNE

Israel reportedly killed another Iranian nuclear scientist, sometime before US President Donald Trump's ceasefire took a firmer hold.

A high-profile Iranian nuclear scientist was killed in an Israeli strike, Iran state TV said, making him the latest in a list of top atomic experts who are said to have been killed in Israeli attacks over the last 12 days.

Israel's tally includes the targeted killings of at least 14 scientists, an unprecedented attack on the brains behind Iran's nuclear programme that outside experts say can only set it back, not stop it.

French President Emmanuel Macron has expressed concerns that the war has increased the risk that Iranian leaders will continue work in secret to enrich uranium that can be used for nuclear weapons. "This risk has, it's true, increased with what has happened recently," Macron said. He repeated France's desire for negotiations to address concerns about Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

"Our shared objective is that Iran doesn't equip itself with a nuclear weapon," he said.

An Israeli strike on Monday on Iran's city of Karaj near Tehran had killed seven members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, including two generals with the paramilitary force, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

On the Israeli side, the death toll from the 12 day war reached 28, according to state emergency services.

According to the data, 1,347 people in Israel were affected, including 28 killed, 17 seriously wounded, 29 moderately wounded, 872 lightly wounded and 401 treated for anxiety.

Qatar condemns Iranian attacks on US air base: "Attacking Qatar is unacceptable... we were surprised by the attack on the military base," said Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, referring to Iran's Monday attack on the Al Udeid Air Base.

The base is a sprawling desert facility in Qatar that serves as a major regional military hub for American forces.

He told reporters Tuesday that the Iranian attack had left a "scar" on his country's relationship with Tehran.

Al Thani said Qatar will not resort to escalatory steps, but will rely on legal measures and diplomacy instead when responding to the attack.

Russia welcomes ceasefire: The Kremlin meanwhile welcomed the ceasefire.

"If it really is possible to reach a ceasefire, then this can only be welcomed. This is what the Russian Federation has been calling for from the very beginning of this conflict. Therefore, this can and should be welcomed," Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the media. "We hope this will be a sustainable ceasefire." *—PTI*

> **(The IDF will) respond forcefully to Iran's violation of the ceasefire with intense strikes against regime targets in the heart of Tehran**
>
> —Israel Katz, Israel Defence Minister

> **Iran's military strikes on American military base Al-Udeid was in exercise of our self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Iran remains fully committed to its good-neighbourliness policy with respect to the State of Qatar and other neighboring countries**
>
> —Esmaeil Baqaei, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson

Iran's 400kg uranium 'missing'

United States Vice President JD Vance on Tuesday told American broadcaster ABC News that Iran's around 400kg of uranium is missing after Washington dropped six bunker buster bombs on three Iranian nuclear facilities last week. It is feared that Iran might use the missing stockpile, which is believed to be enough to make around 10 nuclear weapons, as a bargaining chip in case it agrees for talks on a new nuclear deal. The missing stash, however, is enriched only to 60 per cent – it needs to be enriched to about 90 per cent to be used as a nuclear weapon.

TRUMP THANKS IRAN FOR GIVING 'EARLY NOTICE' ABOUT STRIKES

WASHINGTON, 23 JUNE

President Donald Trump thanked Iran for giving the US and allies "early notice" of Monday's retaliatory missile strike aimed at a major US military installation in the Gulf nation of Qatar.

Trump hoped that Tehran had "gotten it all out of their systems".

"I want to thank Iran for giving us early notice, which made it possible for no lives to be lost, and nobody to be injured. Perhaps Iran can now proceed to peace and harmony in the region." Trump said on social media.

The Iranian attack on US forces at Qatar's Al Udeid Air Base marked Tehran's first act of direct retaliation against the US since Trump ordered strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Leon Panetta, who served as CIA director and defense secretary under former president Barack Obama, said Iran's restrained response suggests that "their ability to respond has probably been damaged pretty badly." He also said it's a potential signal "they're not interested in escalating the war, either with Israel or the United States." *—PTI*

US'S MOST ADVANCED AIRCRAFT CARRIER SAILS TO ISRAEL

NORFOLK, 24 JUNE

The United States' most advanced aircraft carrier left Virginia for a "regularly scheduled deployment" on Tuesday, that could position it near Israel.

The US was already planning to deploy the USS Gerald R Ford when American warplanes bombed three Iranian sites early Sunday to support Israel's goals.

The Ford set sail for the European Theatre of Command, which includes waters off Israel's Mediterranean coast. The presence of the aircraft carrier and its accompanying warships gives Trump the option of a third carrier group in the Middle East if needed.

The US has been shifting military aircraft and warships into and around the region.

Nearly 4,500 sailors departed Tuesday morning from the nation's largest Navy base in Norfolk. The carrier strike group includes guided-missile destroyers and several squadrons of fighter jets.

The Ford is the first in the new Ford class of aircraft carriers, which use an electromagnetic system for launching planes instead of steam catapults to increase flying missions. The ships are also designed to carry a wider variety of planes and operate with several hundred fewer sailors.

The Ford was previously sent to the Eastern Mediterranean after Hamas' 7 October attacks in 2023. *—PTI*

Dutch king's palace to host Trump in Hague

THE HAGUE, 24 JUNE

World leaders gathered in the Netherlands on Tuesday for the start of a two-day NATO summit that could unite the world's biggest security organisation around a new defence spending pledge or widen divisions among the 32 allies.

The allies are expected to endorse a goal of spending 5 per cent of their gross domestic product on their security, to be able to fulfil the alliance's plans for defending against outside attack.

US President Donald Trump's first appearance at NATO since returning to the White House will likely focus on his decision to strike three nuclear enrichment facilities in Iran and his sudden announcement that Israel and Tehran had reached a "complete and total ceasefire".

Past NATO summits have focused almost entirely on the war in Ukraine, now in its fourth year. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte insisted that it remains a vital topic.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived in The Hague for a series of talks, despite his absence from a leaders' meeting aiming to seal the agreement to boost military spending.

Meanwhile, Dutch authorities were investigating possible sabotage against the rail network after a power outage left the country's main airport with limited train services as a two-day summit.

Caretaker Justice Minister David van Weel said that investigators were considering the possibility that fire in some 30 rail cables may have been sabotaged intentionally "By an activist group (or) another state".

Similarly, Pro-Russian hackers launched a series of denial-of-service attacks Monday on several municipalities and organisations linked to a NATO summit, the Dutch government announced. *—PTI*

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof address the media in The Hague on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Israeli forces kill 44 aid seekers in Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, 24 JUNE

Israeli forces and drones opened fire on hundreds of individuals awaiting aid trucks in central Gaza early on Tuesday, resulting in at least 44 fatalities, according to Palestinian witnesses and hospitals.

The Awda hospital, located in the Nuseirat refugee camp, received many of the victims, who were positioned on Salah al-Din Road near Wadi Gaza. Eyewitness Ahmed Halawa described the incident as a "massacre," stating that both tanks and drones targeted the crowd even as people attempted to flee. Hossam Abu Shahada, another witness, recounted a chaotic scene, noting those who were struck and the panic that ensued.

The Awda hospital reported that 146 Palestinians sustained injuries, with 62 in critical condition, necessitating transfer to other medical facilities. Additionally, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital reported receiving six more bodies from the same incident.

In recent weeks, health officials indicate that Israeli forces have repeatedly fired upon crowds seeking essential supplies, leading to numerous casualties. The ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict has resulted in approximately 56,000 Palestinian deaths, predominantly women and children since the 7 October, 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas. *—PTI*

A camp for displaced Palestinians amidst the ruins of buildings destroyed by Israeli bombardments in the west of Gaza City **PHOTO: PTI**

Trump plans move that may put 59M acres of forest land at risk

SANTA FE, 24 JUNE

The Trump administration plans to rescind a nearly quarter-century-old rule that blocked logging on national forest lands, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins announced. This is set to affect 30 per cent of forest lands nation-wide, or about 59 million acres.

The roadless rule adopted in the last days of Bill Clinton's presidency in 2001 long has chafed Republican lawmakers, especially in the West where national forests sprawl across vast, mountainous terrain and the logging industry has waned.

The rule impeded road construction and "responsible timber production" that would have helped reduce the risk of major wildfires, Rollins said at the annual meeting of the Western Governors Association.

"This move opens a new era of consistency and sustainability for our nation's forests," Rollins said on Monday.

Scientists say that worsening wildfires are driven by a combination of climate change that warms and dries out forests, less logging and decades of fire suppression that has allowed fuels to build up. *—PTI*

Judge lifts blockade on Harvard students

A federal judge blocked another effort by the Trump administration to keep international students from attending Harvard University, granting a second preliminary injunction in the case. The order from US District Judge Allison Burroughs in Boston on Monday preserves the ability of foreign students to travel to the US for study at Harvard while the case is decided. *—PTI*

Zohran Kwame Mamdani and Andrew Cuomo **PHOTO: X**

Poll favours Mamdani as NYC's mayoral choice

NEW YORK, 24 JUNE

Zohran Kwame Mamdani, a New York State Assembly member and democratic socialist, is ahead of former Governor Andrew Cuomo in New York City's ranked-choice Democratic primary for mayor, according to a new poll released on Monday.

Born in Uganda, Mamdani is Indian-American or of South Asian descent. He is the first South Asian man to serve in the New York State Assembly, the first Ugandan, and the only third Muslim ever to be a member of the body.

The polls on Tuesday will decide whether to reboot Andrew Cuomo's political career, elevate liberal upstart Mamdani or turn to a crowded field of lesser-known but maybe less-polarising candidates in the party's mayoral primary.

Their choice could say something about what kind of leader Democrats are looking for during President Donald Trump's second term.

The vote takes place about four years after Cuomo resigned after a report commissioned by the state attorney general concluded that he had sexually harassed at least 11 women. *—PTI*

First in Gulf: Oman plans personal I-T on the rich

DUBAI, 24 JUNE

Oman plans to levy personal income tax as part of a broader push to move the sultanate's economy away from reliance on hydrocarbons.

The tax would be a first among the six-member oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council. The 5 per cent tax will start in 2028 and will only be required of those who make upward of $109,000 annually — the top 1 per cent of earners in Oman.

The plan was made public on Sunday by royal decree and it was reported by the official Oman News Agency.

The lack of income tax so far has helped to attract migrant workers to the region.

The introduction of the income tax "will further prioritise financial stability by diversifying revenue sources" that will help shelter the country from "fluctuations" in the global energy market, Minister of Economy Said bin Mohammed Al-Saqri said

He added that oil and gas revenues can account for up to 85 per cent of the nation's public income, depending on the market. *—PTI*

DATE-RAPE DRUGS FEARED

145 people pricked with syringes at French gala

PARIS, 24 JUNE

At least 145 people reported being pricked with syringes during a France's national wide annual street music festival, according to French Interior Ministry. Police detained 12 people on Sunday.

The attacks took place across France, with Paris police confirming at least 13 cases in the capital.

It remains unclear whether the cases of "needle spiking" – in which attackers use syringes to inject victims typically in the arm, leg or buttocks – involved date-rape drugs such as Rohypnol or GHB, which can leave individuals disoriented, unconscious and vulnerable to assault, the ministry said.

The attacks took place across France, with Paris police confirming at least 13 cases in Paris **PHOTO: X @NME**

"The ministry is taking this very seriously," a spokeswoman from the interior ministry told CNN on Monday. "Toxicology tests are being done and the investigation is ongoing."

Millions of people took to the streets across France on Saturday for the Fête de la Musique, with authorities reporting "unprecedented crowds" in Paris. Before the party, posts on social media had called for targeting women during the festivities, news agencies had reported.

A French feminist influencer had also warned women that men were threatening to prick people. The 12 people arrested were believed to have 'needle stabbed' at least 50 people. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: X

Gold price declines by ₹900 to ₹98,900/10g

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Gold prices plummeted Rs 900 to Rs 98,900 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday as the expectations of a ceasefire between Iran and Israel reduced the precious metal's safe-haven appeal in the global market.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 99,800 per 10g in the previous market session. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 800 to Rs 98,300 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It had finished at Rs 99,100 per 10g on Monday. Meanwhile, spot gold fell by USD 46.05 or 1.37 per cent to USD 3,323.05 per ounce in the overseas markets. —*PTI*

Rupee surges 75P to close at 86.03 against USD

MUMBAI, 24 JUNE

The rupee recovered from record low level and closed with a steep gain of 75 paise at 86.03 (provisional) against the US dollar as global crude oil prices went down following hopes of deescalation in Middle East tensions. A weak greenback and positive sentiments in the domestic equity markets further boosted the local unit, according to forex traders. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 86.07 against the US dollar and traded in the range of 85.91-86.27 before closing at 86.03 (provisional), up 75 paise from its previous close. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.48 per cent lower at 97.94.—*PTI*

Google launches advanced AI Search in India

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Google has launched an experimental AI mode feature in India, available in Labs, which promises advanced reasoning and multimodality for English users. This innovation allows for longer and more complex queries—two to three times the length of standard searches—enabling users to engage in exploratory questions and manage intricate tasks such as product comparisons and trip planning. The AI mode is multimodal, allowing users to ask questions via voice or by snapping photos. Google aims to make information access more effortless, noting that its AI Overviews are already utilised by over 1.5 billion users monthly, leading to a significant rise in query types. To try out this new feature, users must sign up for Labs. Google emphasises that AI-generated responses will be prioritised except when confidence is low. —*ANI*

Walmart to source $10B goods from India, says CEO

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

US-based retail giant Walmart is working with suppliers in India to meet its target of sourcing USD 10 billion goods from India for its operations worldwide, its global CEO Doug McMillon said on Tuesday. Walmart has increased sourcing from India over the years, and it is excited with the progress made, he said. "....over the years, you can see how the story is unfolding, and it's really broadening and becoming much more interesting," he said. In December 2020, the Bentonville-headquartered retail giant announced a goal to source USD 10 billion products from India by 2027, aiming to boost exports."At the beginning, we were sourcing products here with limited categories, but we were excited to get started... look what's happened in our sourcing business." he said.—*PTI*

Adani Group to invest up to $20B across businesses

The 5-yr investment plan to chart out next growth phase

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Adani Group plans to invest a record USD 15–20 billion across businesses over the next five years to chart out the next phase of growth, Chairman Gautam Adani said on Tuesday as he touted the conglomerate's strong balance sheet and robust business to shrug off relentless scrutiny.

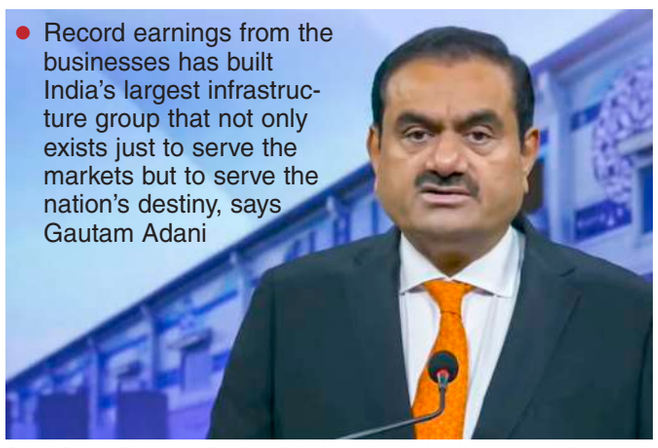
Record earnings from the businesses ranging from seaports to airports, renewable energy parks to data centres, cement to gas and electricity has built India's largest infrastructure group that not only exists just to serve the markets but to serve the nation's destiny, he said.

Addressing the group's annual general meeting virtually, he referred to recent indictment by US authorities in an alleged bribery scheme to win lucrative renewable energy supply contracts, saying no one from Adani Group has been charged with violating US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) or conspiring to obstruct justice.

In January 2023, US short-seller Hindenburg Research published a scathing report describing the Adani Group as "the largest con in corporate history". The fallout was swift: stock prices plummeted, wiping out over USD 150 billion in market value at the lowest point, and the group's biggest public offering was abruptly scrapped.

Just as the group scripted a comeback through a mix of trimming of debt, cutting back on the founder's pledged shares, bringing in both promoter and marquee investor equity, and refocusing attention on the group's core businesses, the conglomerate was hit by US authorities charging Adani and his close associates of allegedly paying bribes to secure Indian power supply contracts and misleading US investors during fund raises.

The Adani group has denied all allegations of wrongdoing and went about refocusing its efforts, resulting in most of its stocks recovering and the group posting record earnings. —*PTI*



Record earnings from the businesses has built India's largest infrastructure group that not only exists just to serve the markets but to serve the nation's destiny, says Gautam Adani

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani speaks during the company's annual general meeting on his birthday on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Adani bags $1B financing for Mumbai airport

Adani Airports Holdings Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd and India's largest private airport operator, has secured USD 1 billion in financing from global investors to fund construction of the Mumbai International Airport, it said on Tuesday. The fund was raised through a project finance structure for its Mumbai International Airport Ltd. "The transaction was led by Apollo-managed funds, with participation from leading institutional investors and insurance companies which included BlackRock-managed funds and Standard Chartered, underlining global confidence in India's Infrastructure opportunity...," it said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Sensex rises 150 pts amid worsening geopolitical crises

MUMBAI, 24 JUNE

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty on Tuesday gave up most of their sharp intra-day gains due to the emergence of profit-taking as investors turned cautious amid reports of a ceasefire violation between Iran and Israel.

In the morning trade, markets bounced back sharply, mirroring a rally in global peers and a steep decline in crude oil prices amid hopes of a potential de-escalation in the Middle East conflict.

After surging 1,121.37 points or 1.36 per cent to 83,018.16 in intra-day trade, the 30-share Sensex later trimmed most of its gains as reports surfaced of the ceasefire plan faltering. But, the benchmark still managed to settle in the green, climbing 158.32 points or 0.19 per cent to 82,055.11.

On similar lines, the 50-share Nifty rose 72.45 points or 0.29 per cent to end at 25,044.35. The index fell from an intra-day high of 25,317.70.

"Initial gains in the domestic market, driven by the ceasefire announcement and sharp drop in crude prices, were short-lived as renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East unsettled investor sentiment.

From the Sensex constituents, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv and Titan were among the biggest gainers. —*PTI*

NO MANUFACTURING

Tesla's only plan is to sell their cars in India: Kumaraswamy

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel HD Kumaraswamy on Tuesday said that US vehicle major Tesla has so far shown interest only in opening a showroom in India, referring to the speculations of the company's intent to setup a manufacturing unit in India.

"Tesla is only interested in opening a showroom till now. They want to sell their car in India. There is no further development about Tesla," the Union Minister said, speaking on the sidelines of the launch of a portal that will enable foreign electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers to submit their applications to manufacture EVs in India.

Scheme to woo global EV makers: Launched by the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI), the scheme is expected to attract investments from global EV manufacturers and promote India as a manufacturing destination for e-vehicles.

The Scheme will also help put India on the global map for manufacturing of EVs, generate employment and achieve the goal of "Make in India."

The approved applicants will be allowed to import Completely Built-in Units (CBUs) of e-4W with a minimum CIF value of USD 35,000 at reduced customs duty of 15 per cent for a period of 5 years from the Application Approval Date to encourage the global manufacturers to invest under the Scheme.

Approved applicants would be required to make a minimum investment of Rs 4,150 crores in line with the provisions of the scheme. The scheme is strategically crafted to position India as a global hub for electric vehicle manufacturing. —*ANI*

India imposes anti-dumping duty on four Chinese chemicals

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

In a bid to safeguard domestic manufacturers from unfair pricing practices, India has imposed anti-dumping duties on four chemicals imported from China. The affected chemicals include PEDA (used in herbicides), Acetonitrile (utilised in the pharmaceutical sector), Vitamin A Palmitate, and Insoluble Sulphur.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, part of the Department of Revenue, announced that the duties would be levied for a period of five years. The duties are based on recommendations from the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), which operates under the Ministry of Commerce.

Specifically, the duty on PEDA will range from USD 1,305.60 to USD 2,017.90 per tonne, while a duty of up to USD 481 per tonne has been set for Acetonitrile imported from China, Russia, and Taiwan. For Vitamin A Palmitate, the duty is up to USD 20.87 per kilogram, covering imports from China, the European Union, and Switzerland.

In addition, a duty of up to USD 358 per tonne has been imposed on Insoluble Sulphur, commonly used in the tyre industry, from China and Japan.

These anti-dumping measures are implemented to ensure fair trade practices and create a level playing field for local producers in accordance with the regulations of the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO). —*PTI*

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PHOTO: FREEPIK

THREE FIRMS GET SEBI APPROVAL FOR IPO ISSUE

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

GNG Electronics, logistics provider Glottis, and pharmaceutical firm Amanta Healthcare have received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to raise funds through initial public offerings (IPOs). The firms, which filed their preliminary IPO documents between February and March, obtained observation letters from SEBI between 16 and 20 June.

The GNG Electronics IPO will consist of a fresh issue of equity shares valued at Rs 450 crore, along with an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 5.1 million shares by promoters. The OFS includes the sale of 35,000 shares each by Sharad Khandelwal and Vidhi Sharad Khandelwal, as well as up to 5.03 million shares from Amiable Electronics. Additionally, GNG is considering a pre-IPO funding round of up to Rs 90 crore. —*PTI*

Trade deals with US, EU to conclude soon: FM

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said negotiations for the proposed free trade agreements with the US and European Union (EU) are progressing at a fast pace and would be concluded soon.

All efforts are being made to boost exports to achieve the ambitious target of USD 2 trillion by 2030.

India has already signed free trade agreements with the UAE, Australia, and 4-nation EFTA (European Free Trade Association) bloc and negotiations have been completed with the UK, she said adding "with the US and the European Union, negotiations are really intensely going on and should come to conclusion sooner."

Indian exporters outperform global peers:

Sitharaman also lauded the resilience of Indian exporters, highlighting that the country's export growth of 6.3 per cent has significantly outpaced the global average of 4 per cent. Sitharaman said, "Despite the complex geopolitical situation, Indian exporters are doing well."

She also noted that India's export performance has been particularly impressive. Indian exporters have demonstrated remarkable adaptability and innovation in navigating multiple global crises that have disrupted international trade flows, she said.

Observing that the country's exporters are "swimming against tides" , she assured all support to them and urged them to focus on innovation and finding newer markets for their products. —*PTI&ANI*

PRICES START AT RS 17K

Novo Nordisk's anti-obesity drug is here

NEW DELHI, 24 JUN

Danish pharmaceutical firm Novo Nordisk on Tuesday launched in India its anti-obesity drug Wegovy, indicated for both long-term chronic weight management and reduction in risk of major adverse cardiovascular events.

The company, known for its dominance in the insulin segment, is launching Wegovy in India across urban and rural markets in all five-dose strengths to play its "power game" expecting it to be one of the top launches in the industry, Novo Nordisk India Managing Director Vikrant Shrotriya told PTI.

Wegovy will be available in a once-weekly innovative pen device in dose strengths 0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, 1 mg, 1.7 mg and a maintenance dosing of 2.4 mg with monthly price of Rs 17,345-26,050, said the company, maker of blockbuster drug Ozempic that is indicated for treatment of diabetes.

The company said semaglutide is the active ingredient in both Ozempic and Wegovy. In many countries, Ozempic is indicated for the treatment of adults with insufficiently controlled type 2 diabetes. It is not yet available in India.

On the other hand Wegovy is indicated for weight management and reducing the risk of major adverse cardiovascular events in adults with established cardiovascular disease and either obesity or overweight.

The drug works by acting on key areas of the brain involved in appetite regulation and food intake thereby reducing hunger, improving satiety and reducing cravings for food, eventually inducing weight-loss. It also improves insulin resistance and has a beneficial effect on reduction of cardiometabolic events and risk factors. —*PTI*

In many countries, Ozempic is indicated for the treatment of adults with insufficiently controlled type 2 diabetes PHOTO: X

S&P raises FY26 GDP growth estimate to 6.5%

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

S&P Global Ratings has revised its GDP growth forecast for India in the current fiscal year to 6.5 per cent, attributing the change to lower crude oil prices, monetary easing, and an anticipated normal monsoon. The agency indicated that ongoing geopolitical tensions are unlikely to exert significant pressure on the rupee or inflation.

In its Asia Pacific Economic Outlook, S&P noted rising global economic risks stemming from recent turbulence in the Middle East. It warned that a sustained increase in oil prices could significantly affect Asia-Pacific economies, particularly net energy importers like India. Currently, Brent crude prices have fallen to approximately USD 69 a barrel, offering some reassurance.

Economist Vishrut Rana highlighted that Indian energy prices remain lower than last year, helping to contain current account outflows and domestic energy price pressures. S&P projected India's GDP to grow by 6.5 per cent in fiscal 2026, supported by a normal monsoon and income-tax concessions.

Inflation in India is expected to average 4 per cent in 2025, down from 4.6 per cent in 2024. —*PTI*

PHOTO: FB

Paras Gupta storms into semis at Asian Snooker

COLOMBO, 24 JUNE

India's Paras Gupta, who outplayed reigning IBSF World 6-Red snooker champion Kamal Chawla, scored a crushing 5-0 win over Sunny Wang to storm into the semi-finals of the ACBS Asian 6-Red Snooker Championship here on Tuesday. The 29-year-old Agra cueist played the big points well to put it past the Singaporean, who had earlier shocked former champion Muhammad Sajjad of Pakistan 5-0. Although he went up 2-0 with a run of 28 in the second, he was not in control of the proceedings. Fortunately for him, Wang failed to take the chances that came his way and let Gupta off the hook. Gupta took the scrappy third and fourth frames to go up 4-0. It was only in the final frame that the Indian rediscovered his touch, making a silken-smooth break of 59 to close out the match. In the semifinals, he will face either Habib Sabah (Bahrain) or Ali Al Obaidli (Qatar). —*PTI*

Leeds signs Slovenia defender Jaka Bijol for PL

LONDON, 24 JUNE

Newly promoted Premier League club Leeds added Slovenia standout Jaka Bijol to its defense ahead of the second-tier champion's return to the top level. Leeds said the 26-year-old center back signed a five-year deal. The transfer fee was reportedly around $20 million. Bijol has played 63 times for Slovenia, including all four games at 2024 European Championship. Slovenia starts a 2026 World Cup qualifying group in September in a competitive group with Switzerland, Sweden and Kosovo. Leeds, whose United States ownership group is led by 49ers Enterprises, starts its Premier League season hosting Everton on 18 August. —*PTI*

ICC raps Pant for showing dissent at umpire decision

Wicket-keeper breached Level-1 of ICC Code of Conduct

LEEDS, 24 JUNE

India wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant has been reprimanded by the ICC for showing dissent at an umpire's decision during the third day's play of the ongoing opening Test against England here.

Pant, who had an exceptional outing with the bat during the Headingley Test with hundreds in both the innings, was reprimanded for his on-field conduct during England's first innings.

The 27-year-old was found to have breached Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct.

"Pant was found to have breached Article 2.8 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to showing dissent at an Umpire's decision during an International Match," the ICC stated.

One demerit point has also been added to Pant's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in 24 months.

The incident happened in the 61st over of England's innings, when Harry Brook and Ben Stokes were batting. Pant was seen having a discussion with the umpires regarding the condition of the ball.

When the umpires refused to change the ball after checking it with the ball gauge, the wicket-keeper showed his dissent by throwing the ball on the ground in front of the umpires.

There was no disciplinary hearing as Pant admitted to the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by ICC match referee Richie Richardson.

The charges were brought in by the on-field umpires, Chris Gaffaney and Paul Reiffel, along with the third umpire Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid and the fourth umpire, Mike Burns.

Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points. —*PTI*

Rishabh Pant during a practice session ahead of the Test match series against England in the UK PHOTO: PTI

When you look at all of Rishabh Pant's achievements, the first instinct is to think of him purely as a batter – and understandably so. When you're talking about batting exploits in England, scoring twin hundreds, the names he's being compared with are legends like Dilip Vengsarkar, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, and Sunil Gavaskar. But here's the remarkable part – he's also a wicket-keeper. That's what makes it almost unbelievable

—Sanjay Manjrekar, former cricketer

I am just getting runs now. There was a time when I was just getting starts, but not converting those to big scores in Tests especially. This stage of cricket I am at, journey I am at, a lot has changed. I am much calmer in my head and not chasing numbers. I am just enjoying my cricket as much as I can

–KL Rahul, Indian wicket-keeper–batter

INDIA VS ENGLAND TEST

'We will go for win': Tongue insists Eng can beat India

LEEDS, 24 JUNE

England fast bowler Josh Tongue said they will go all out for a victory against India on the fifth and final day of the first Test here on Tuesday.

England ended day four at 21 without loss, needing 350 more runs to clinch the match and take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

If successful, it would mark England's second-highest successful run chase in Test cricket and the second-best at this venue.

"No. Just go for the win. That's the clear message in the changing room," said Tongue when asked about England's approach in the final innings.

"Hopefully we're not in that situation (draw) anyway. We'll try and be as positive as we can in that first session, then see where we are at lunch - then we'll take things from there."

Tongue said the current England batting line up has the belief of chasing down any target against any side.

Playing only his fourth Test, Tongue (3/72) took three wickets in four deliveries to help England dismiss India for 364 in their second innings.

Tongue, is nicknamed 'The Mop' by his England and Nottinghamshire teammate Ben Duckett for running through opposition's lower order. —*PTI*

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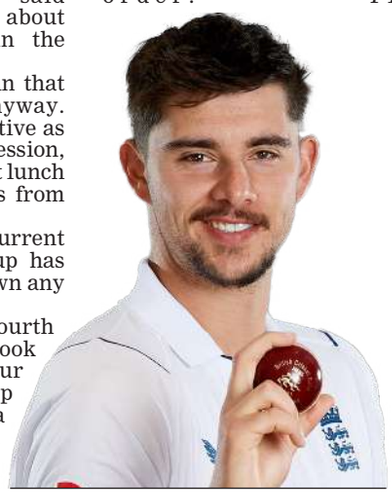


Olympic-medallist shooter Vijay denied coach's job

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

"Pained" by the national shooting federation repeatedly "ignoring" him for the post of national coach, Olympic silver-medallist Vijay Kumar has written to its president requesting him to take note of his "unparalleled achievements" and provide him the opportunity to groom the next generation of shooters.

Kumar, the 2012 London Olympics silver-medallist and one of the finest rapid-fire pistol exponents, added that he felt demotivated seeing some coaches with absolutely "no international experience or performance" being selected for top coaching jobs.

National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) President, Kalikesh Singh Deo, however, said that though he was not aware of a letter from Vijay, the veteran shooter was "a deserving candidate and we are re-evaluating the coaching hiring after the Asian Championships (in Kazakhstan from 16 to 30 August). He alleged that some of the selected coaches had a history of doping or indiscipline and still they had been included in the setup. —*PTI*

Matthews closes in on top ranking post Proteas series

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Hayley Matthews' heroics against South Africa has seen the West Indies star close in on top spot on the latest ICC Women's T20I Batter Rankings, according to the ICC website.

Matthews scored 147 runs across the three T20I contests at home to lead the West Indies to a drought-breaking 2-1 series triumph and in the process closed in on Beth Mooney for the mantle as the No.1 ranked batter in the shortest format.

The 27-year-old improved to a career-best mark of 770 rating points and now trails Mooney by just 24 rating points at the top of the list for T20I batters.

A trio of South Africa batters make ground up the rankings following the latest update, with Tazmin Brits (up two spots to sixth), Nadine de Klerk (up three places to 51st) and Annerie Dercksen (up eight rungs to equal 79th) all gaining places after some good efforts against the West Indies.

It's a similar story on the updated list for T20I bowlers, with South African pair Nonkululek Mlaba (up six spots to equal eighth) and Ayabonga Khaka (up four places to equal 38th) among the biggest winners. —*ANI*

GRABBED 114 WICKETS IN 33 TESTS

Ex-India spinner Dilip Doshi no more

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

Former India left-arm spinner Dilip Doshi passed away on Monday in London, aged 77. ESPNcricinfo said Doshi died due to heart issues in London, where he had lived for several decades. With a classical left-armer's action, Doshi scalped 114 Test wickets in 33 appearances, including six five-wicket hauls.

In a post on X, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) condoled Doshi's demise, stating, "The BCCI mourns the sad demise of former India spinner, Dilip Doshi, who has unfortunately passed away in London. May his soul rest in peace."

He also left his mark in the ODIs and finished with 22 wickets in 15 ODIs while maintaining an economy of 3.96. Doshi represented Saurashtra, Bengal, Warwickshire and Nottinghamshire in first-class cricket and picked up 898 wickets in 238 appearances at 26.58.

Doshi followed in the footsteps of the famous spin quartet of the 1970s and made his debut at the age of 32. At Nottinghamshire, the West Indies legend Garfield Sobers heavily influenced the left-arm spinner. He made a silent exit from international cricket in the 1980s and gave a compelling account of his cricketing days in his autobiography Spin Punch.

Among his accomplished feats, Doshi played an immaculate role with his five-wicket haul in the Melbourne Test of 1981, which helped India orchestrate a memorable victory. —*ANI*

Dilip Doshi passed away in London on Monday PHOTO: PTI

I met Dilip bhai for the first time in the UK in 1990, and he bowled to me in the nets on that tour. He was really fond of me, and I reciprocated his feelings... A warm-hearted soul like Dilip bhai will be deeply missed

—Sachin Tendulkar, former cricketer

Feisty competitor deserved more respect

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

It was in the late 1960s, Dilip Doshi used to be a terror for batters in the Indian university circuit when his Calcutta University and later Bengal Ranji teammate late Gopal Bose had asked him, "It's fine you get university batters out but can you get Garry Sobers out?"

Doshi apparently was nonchalant as ever and said matter-of-factly, "Yeah, I can."

In fact, he did dismiss Sobers in a World XI match a few years later but more importantly played alongside the West Indian legend in English County in Nottinghamshire for a number of seasons.

Impossible wasn't a word in Doshi's dictionary or else in those days of late 70s, he couldn't have eclipsed Padmakar Shivalkar and Rajinder Goel to make his Test debut at 32 and still get more than 100 Test wickets, playing mostly on flat and dead tracks.

Doshi had great success on Indian tracks but it was the tour of Australia in 1980-81 where he picked up 11 wickets (6 in Adelaide and 5 in Melbourne) in more than 150-plus overs on non-responsive pitches.

His scalps included Greg Chappell, Doug Walters, Rod Marsh, Kim Hughes, among others.

He could flight the ball, had a lovely loop and even when he wasn't turning the ball square, he could pitch it on same length ball after ball, creating doubts in batter's mind about how much it would turn or straighten or go in with the angle.

'Dilip Da', as he was known in Bengal cricket circles, believed in continuity -- whether pitching countless deliveries on same length or listening to Rolling Stones for 50 years and being one of Mick Jagger's closest buddies for nearly five decades.

What became his impediment was batting, as he could easily have been No. 11 in a squad of 'No. 11 batters'. And, his fielding was an apology.

Hence, when there's a slight dip in form, the cricket establishment at that time knew whom to get rid of.

It was the 1982-83 tour of Pakistan where Javed Miandad really took his mickey.

Doshi's exit was pretty bitter as he played his last Test in 1983, also against Pakistan in a drawn Test in Bengaluru and he got Wasim Raja's wicket in a rain-affected match.

Doshi believed he could have played at least a couple of years more and that angst was there with him.

But he was loyal soldier of Indian cricket in those four years. —*PTI*

Dilip Doshi in action in his heydays PHOTO: BCCI

Healy eyes back-to-back WC glory, 2026 India series

SYDNEY, 24 JUNE

Australia women's team captain Alyssa Healy has ruled out retiring after the upcoming ODI World Cup, revealing that a series of injuries have only deepened her hunger to continue playing at least until the series against India in 2026.

The 35-year-old wicketkeeper-batter has battled a string of injuries since last year, starting with a stress fracture in her foot during the T20 World Cup, followed by a knee issue that sidelined her from multiple fixtures.

Healy, who has joked about contemplating retirement several times before, admitted she had initially considered bowing out after the ODI World Cup in India this year. However, her perspective has shifted.

"It's (retirement date) probably shifted a little bit. It's (injuries have) made me realise that I still want to do a little bit more than maybe what I thought," Healy told the Australian Associated Press (AAP).

Though she featured sporadically during Australia's victorious Ashes campaign at home, Healy missed tours to New Zealand and the Women's Premier League in India.

Healy is expected to return to action in August, when Australia A face India A in Queensland.

Australia, the most decorated side in women's cricket, are now aiming to become the first team in nearly four decades to win back-to-back ODI World Cups, a feat that fuels Healy's determination. —*PTI*

Leipzig hires Ole Werner as coach

LEIPZIG, 24 JUNE

Leipzig hired Ole Werner as coach on Tuesday, ending a long tangle with his former club Werder Bremen over his availability.

The 37-year-old Werner signed a two-year contract to the end of the 2026-27 season, Leipzig said on its website.

Werner was fired by Bremen in May once the season ended because he refused to extend his contract with the Bundesliga club. It had another year to run. Werner said he had reached a "certain point" at the club after leading it to promotion in 2022 and overseeing steady improvement despite limited resources.

Despite being dismissed as coach, Werner remained contracted to Bremen. Leipzig sporting director Marcel Schäfer and Bremen counterpart Clemens Fritz needed long negotiations before finally agreeing on a reported transfer fee of 2 million euros to release Werner. —*ANI*

'AITA spent more than ₹1 crore on president's foreign trips with wife'

NEW DELHI, 24 JUNE

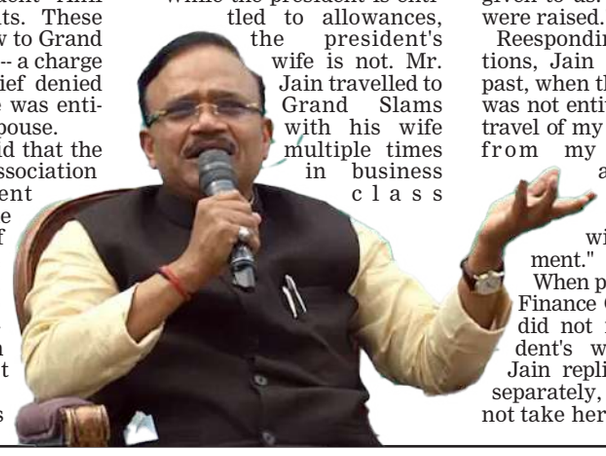
AITA Finance Committee member Hironmoy Chatterjee on Tuesday alleged that the tennis federation "wrongly" spent more than Rs 1 crore on President Anil Jain's foreign visits. These trips including a few to Grand Slams with his wife -- a charge the sports body chief denied by claiming that he was entitled to travel with spouse.

Chatterjee also said that the All India Tennis Association (AITA) President worked against the members ahead of the September 2024 elections, forcing affiliated bodies to propose a no-confidence motion against him last year.

Chatterjee, who is also the AITA Vice President (Sports), said the Finance Committee in May 2022 raised the allowance of office-bearers for their foreign visits but it never got the approval of the EC.

"While the president is entitled to allowances, the president's wife is not. Mr. Jain travelled to Grand Slams with his wife multiple times in business class during his tenure and AITA wrongly paid for that," Chatterjee said.

Asked why the issue is being raised now, Chatterjee said, "We did raise it at the 2023 AGM, but no information was given to us. Questions indeed were raised."

Reesponding to the allegations, Jain told PTI, "In the past, when the president's wife was not entitled, I paid for the travel of my wife and children from my own pocket. But after the AITA approved it, my wife travelled with me on entitlement."

When pointed out that the Finance Committee in 2022 did not include the president's wife's entitlement, Jain replied, "It was done separately, otherwise I would not take her along." —*PTI*